

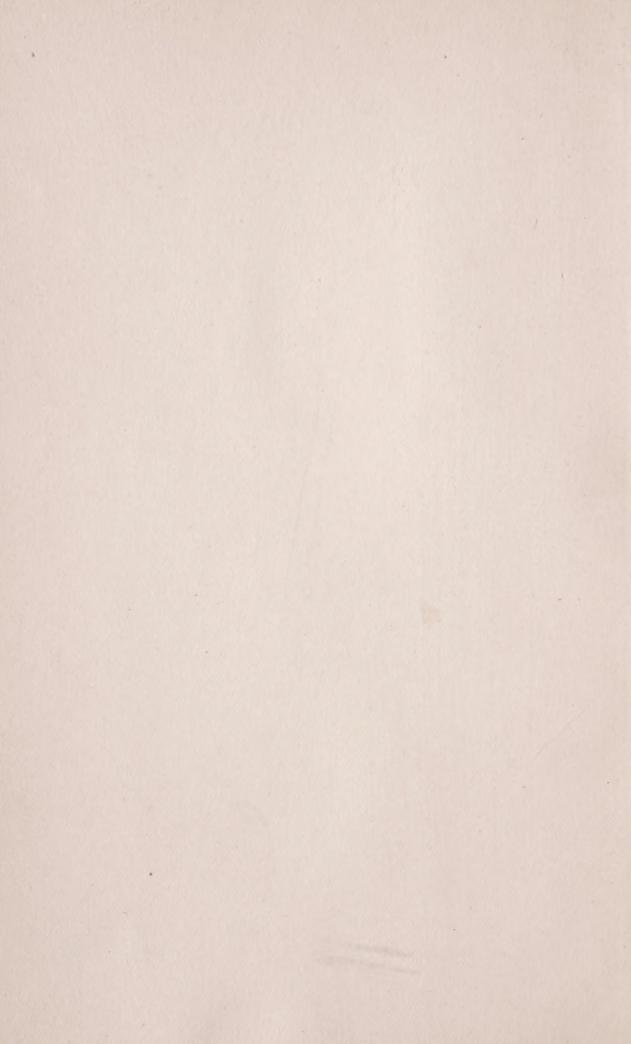
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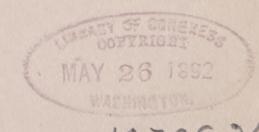
ITALIAN CHILD-LIFE

OR

MARIETTA'S GOOD TIMES

MARIETTA AMBROSI

ILLUSTRATED



BOSTON
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WASHINGTON STREET OPPOSITE BROMFIELD

(1892)

A 496

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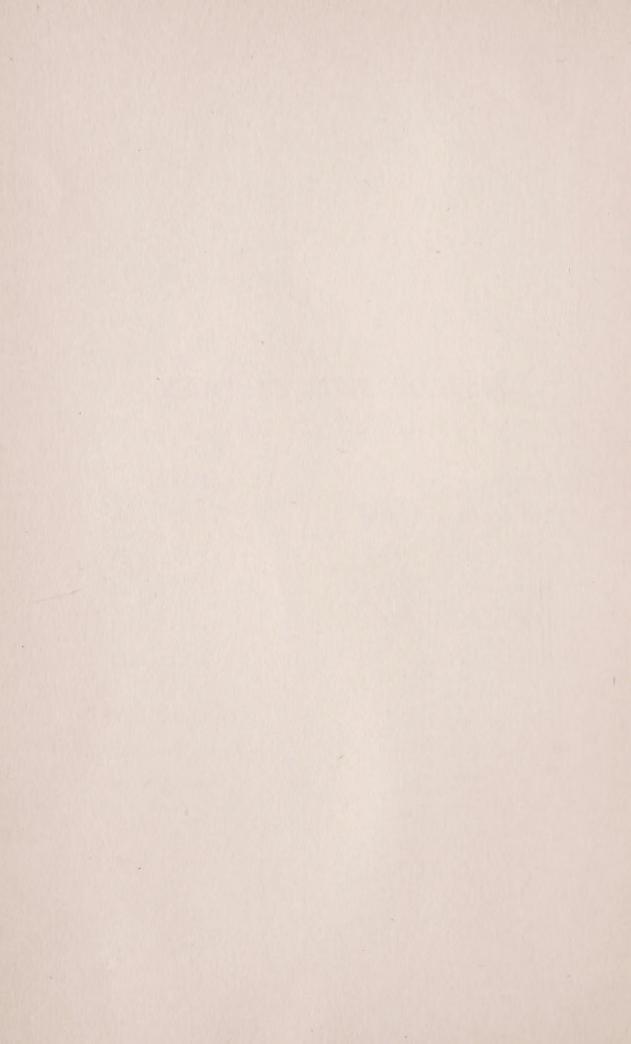
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ITALIAN CHILD-LIFE

OR, MARIETTA'S GOOD TIMES

I.

THE great desire of traveling that I have, grew with me from my birth. Always, when I was a child, at any time of day—while working, walking or playing with my mates—I would bother them making my desire to travel known to them, and telling them dreams I had.

Sometimes, in my dreams, I saw myself in a cage of monkeys; sometimes I found myself traveling in one of those wagons that contain a kitchen, dining-room and bedroom; some other time I was sitting in front of a tent, holding a stick in my hand and shouting at the people.

(My American Mother.)

My mother after having put us children to bed would tell us all sorts of stories, and of course, truly American that she was, she would talk continually about her beautiful American soil, of her Boston and of her Dorchester Lower She told us that her house had "No. 1" on it, and how it stood near the bridge; now the Baker's chocolate manufactory occupies that beautiful spot. But she did not know it then; we were in Italy. She thought that she could take us children right there, into her old house, and show us the little dry-goods store that her mother used to keep, and the barber-shop of her father; and she told us how she, too, used to shave those customers of his—some of them are living now. She told us how one time, there having arrived a cargo of dates which had spoiled, the merchants thought best to dump them right at the spot, and she with her boy and girl companions coming out from school, and seeing that pile of dates, thought best to empty their satchels and fill them with the spoiled fruit. Well, we children of Lombardy, who had to pay a soldo for each date—we naturally envied her her good luck, and we wished we could see that wonderful country of America.

(How I came to be born in Tyrol.)

In 1835 my mother's father thought of returning to his native land, Lombardia. It was as if he knew that he had only a short time to live (he died three years afterwards). Lucy—that is my mother—and Charles—that is her brother—of course began writing letters of farewell to their friends, and making the usual promises to write to them from Lombardia, telling them all their adventures in the new world. They were twelve and fourteen years old. When the grand day arrived, the sight of the large ship that was going to bear them off made them forget for a

little while their young grievances. Not so their mother — my grandmother; she was going to leave her native land and she was old enough to doubt very much if she would see it again. She was so overcome with her grief that she had to be carried on board ship.

Once there, and the sails set, they were soon out of sight of Dorchester, their point of embarkation. As the ship was a mercantile one they had to sleep in hammocks; their stateroom was adorned with barrels of flour tight up, against and around it. For provisions they carried a large hen-coop full of chickens, and some live sheep. They were the only family aboard; besides them were the captain, a few sailors and a cabin boy, who when out of duty played with Lucy and Charles.

Every thing went along quite well for a time, when one night a heavy sea tipped that ship over a little. My mother's family were downstairs in the dark. They heard a crash, and they had to hold on to their hammocks pretty steadily

until morning. When the hatches were opened they saw what had happened to themselves—some barrels had broken and thrown all the flour around the room, and they had all turned gray in one night; it took them several nights to get black hair again. I used to like to hear my mother tell of that night when she was a little girl on the ocean.

Now I will tell you a strange thing. As the voyage was very long and tedious, the old captain took a fancy to fall in love with my grandmother; but as there was a grandfather he knew that he could not marry her, and as he had lots of time to think (the wind being low) he had an idea (a very simple one) that he would kill my grandfather! So he called him in his cabin, and after talking of one thing and another he took out a pistol and told my grandfather to say his prayers. My grandfather in his fright put up his hand near his mouth with some of his fingers bent; it so happened that unconsciously he made a Freemason's sign. The old

captain was a Freemason, and understood that sign; he dropped the pistol and embraced my grandfather and asked his pardon, and begged him not to give him up to the police when they landed.

My grandfather who had hardly recovered from his fright thought that the captain had turned crazy, but he did not stop to ask any explanation; he told the captain that he was his friend still, but he wished he would not play that trick again upon him. After that day the captain attended to his duty, but my grandfather thought best to carry a weapon, and he never found out until they landed that it was his unconscious sign that saved him.

One day, finally, they began to see land, and the next morning they found themselves in Palermo Bay. It happened to be carnival time, and imagine the pleasant surprise for those American children, Charles and Lucy, to see several beautiful draped boats advancing towards their ship. The people had taken their

masks off their faces, but had on the masquerading costumes, and my mother says that to see them grouped, as they were in those draped boats with the sun (as it shines there) all over them, she thought herself carried to heaven. Those that came on board brought to them oranges, prickly pears and statuettes. My grandmother returned the presents in homemade candy that the ladies of Dorchester had made and stored away in a large tin box for her.

At night they had a supper and dance on board the ship. It so happened that it was Thanksgiving Day, and also the birthday of Charlie, and my grandfather paid the expenses. When the day after they were allowed to land they had more festivities, as the captain was a Neapolitan and was well known in that port.

From there my ancestors went to Genoa; there too they had a grand time. Afterwards they traveled by stages until they arrived at Mori, the land where my grandfather was born. Of course he surprised his folks not a little. After having been looked upon as a seventh wonder by those village people he began to put the children to school and settle up his affairs a little. My grandmother cut open her corsets, and a petticoat, and the belt of Charlie and Lucy, and the bright doubloons began to drop out.

When they went to school Charlie was surprised that he could not sew as he used to do in Dorchester school, and he surprised his schoolfellows when he took them home to show them the two beautiful table-covers that he and Lucy had made, in so many octagonal pieces; those covers afterward came back to America again after fifty years of absence.

The cholera of 1838 took my grandfather away, and my grandmother was left with her two children, the only interpreters she had. She died in 1861 and she could not speak clear Italian even then. She had moved to Peschiera where were some relations of my grandfather.

When Lucy, my mother, came to an age to marry, she married a Veronese. Six children were born to them; one died, the others are living now. Of my grandmother I don't remember much, except that when I returned from school she always had some little present for me, in the shape of little sugar boats, baskets, or a flower, all made of sugar; it puzzled me where she got those things, as I only could see one at a time. When I asked her one day about them, she told me never to be inquisitive in this world, and I would get along well. She died, poor thing, in 1861.

From Peschiera my parents moved to Brescia; then they moved to Tirolo, then to Mantua, then they moved to Tirolo again.

Our house in Brescia was opposite the Duomo Nuovo and Duomo Vecchio; this last one is sunk way down a long flight of stairs and its windows being quite large and about three feet from the ground, they serve as little booths for the cobblers.

(How I helped my country at the age of six.)

On the street-floor of our house there was, and there is now, the largest coffee-house in Brescia, and in a room next to our apartment they used to roast their coffee every day. They employed an old man by the name of Romeo; he was then about sixty years of age, and I got acquainted with him. I used to go into that room and help him by turning that roaster crank, while he was telling me soldiers' stories. During that year we had a great many soldiers in our city, of all nationalities — French, Prussians, Croates, Austrian Zouave, Turk, etc. That Piazza del Duomo was always crowded with soldiers, so was the café.

One day they had a parade on the Piazza del Duomo, and poor Romeo wanted to look at it; so he asked me to turn the roaster for him while he was looking on from the window. I did so for a little while, but when I heard a strange band striking a foreign air I let go and

went to the other window. When I came back I found the room all in smoke. Poor Romeo was frightened; the coffee was burning, but with a few pails of water we put the fire out.

During the war of 1859 we children made several soldi First of all, in cutting up newspapers into strips of about eight inches long and selling them by the bunch to the café owners, as their customers preferred them to matches. Then when the wounded were brought into our city they put them everywhere - in churches, palaces, porticoes, etc. - and we children helped in distributing clothes and victuals; they took the morgue and converted it into a kitchen. I went there many times, having a large pail to fill and carry, with another boy or girl, to some church or to the other places. Besides, we children went from house to house to collect all the linen rags we could get, and if a party had no rags they gave us money so that we could buy them at some junk-shop.

When we had a quantity of linen, we would

go into a yard and begin taking all the threads out, and then we took the lint to the doctors; sometimes we would get a few cents for our trouble, and sometimes only caresses and kisses; either pleased us.

One day a young pretty lady, the owner of a bakery, called eight of us girls into her yard, and she made us sit in those large baskets that we used for bread, and then she gave us two whole sheets to cut up for lint. We were engaged in our pleasant work when we heard the tocsin. We knew what that meant. The enemy was near, or some other thing just as horrible must have happened.

This young bakeress called her four help-men, and they shut up their store. They took us out of those baskets and forbade us to speak; they put us all in the oven, and locked it. None too soon; we could hear from our concealment the pounding that those Croates were doing on the store-blinds, swearing and shouting, wanting bread by force. Our people in

vain told them they had none—meantime they were cocking their guns. The store-blinds were not strong enough to resist the outside pounding. All at once we heard a crash and shrieks. We knew then we were lost. We could hear their sabers, their shots, but did not dare to move. We only whispered to each other that they, being Croates, would eat us sure.

After having broken everything they could find, we heard some drums and a great stampede. It was our Guardia Nationale that came in time. The bakers forgot us, and we had to pound that oven door before they remembered us; we were cool, but all in a perspiration. A gentleman that happened there gave us some cognac. For that day we had had enough.

That bakeress, Teresina, loved dolls very much, and she always had two or three of them under her counter to give to us girls if we did her some services. One day she showed me a pretty doll, and told me she would give it to me if I did her message right.

She gave me a note, and when the students began to pass in front of her store she pointed out to me four fellows who walked in a row, and told me to put that note in the coat-pocket of the second fellow from the left. So I followed them a good way, and with my mind on that pretty doll I forgot which of the second fellows was the one. Something was telling me it was the right one, and something said it was the left — besides, as they chatted they stopped and changed their places. Of course I knew that if I went back to Teresina with the note she would not give me the doll, so I put my note in the second fellow's pocket, and ran back to get my doll. I went home happy that night.

Next morning I found Teresina cross and in tears. It seemed that I mistook my fellow, and another student called at her store for an explanation, and her betrothed husband came in and broke the engagement.

Although I did not realize the serious part of the matter I left Teresina, and when I saw the students I explained to them that it was my mistake. They laughed and went to make things cheerful again with her. For my part, I gave up the messenger job; I never have carried another letter since.

(My early dramatics and accidents.)

REMEMBER from my childhood that my only thought, my only hope, was to get on the stage. Not that I was coaxed by anybody; my parents, contrary to many, never bothered themselves about my future. In fact, up to the age of nineteen I led an Arab life; I was a regular tomboy, as you call it in English.

I must have been seven years old when I took a fancy to the stage. I loved the ballet, and I loved to put a chair over a table and shout. I talked anything that came into my head; and I used to go down to our landlady when she was taking her dinner, to dance the polka mazurka (her husband whistling it for me), no other dance pleased me so much; I

wore a lavender dress very short, bare arms and shoulders; I was very fat and round then.

We lived at the top floor, and I had to go to the first floor. One day they had some masons to put new marble steps; they had taken two steps out, when twelve o'clock struck. They (as it is their custom) left the work as it was, without putting up any notice in the corridors.

Well, I dressed as usual for my dance and ran downstairs; but this time I made my entrance quite differently from my former ones—that is, before they knew what happened, they found me lying on their floor bleeding, minus three front teeth and with a dislocated elbow; they picked me up and carried me upstairs; for a few days I had to stop my dancing.

On week days I attended school at the Convent of the Dorothea; there everything went well, until one Sunday afternoon, as we were playing under the big arcades that surrounded the beautiful garden of the convent, a girl in playing, gave me a push, and I fell against a

bench that had a nail sticking out in the corner; that nail struck my nose enough to make a hole right where the bridge would be if I had any; as it was it flattened my poor nose all the more.

The frightened nuns held me up in front of a pail of water. I remember they stuck a big piece of court plaster on the hole, then I fainted. I woke up after a long while, and I found myself lying on a sofa in my landlady's parlor; but in opening my eyes I saw something like a box that covered my nose. They tried to keep my poor nose together, but for a long while I looked like a crushed mummy, and my mother said that she prayed the Madonna that if I could not look any better she would rather see me dead, as I was frightful to look at.

By and by my teeth began to appear and my nose got a little smaller. Still even now when I am sick I show the black mark of that nail. However, it seems that I have turned better looking than my mother expected to see me.

Some people say to me now, that if I had a straight nose I might be good looking.

(Our Christmas Eves.)

One of our grand times, for us children, was the Christmas Eve. In our country the celebration begins thus:

The old folks prepare all the good things we are going to eat on the Christmas night after we have heard the mass, of which the first begins at midnight. The victuals are all cooked without fat, our fish being always cooked in olive oil.

We children, that night, try hard to keep our eyes open so as to go with the old people. Of course we fall asleep many times, although on that evening we always make up big parties and pass most of the evening sitting together under the chimney.

Our fireplaces are very large and high, with a very high step at each side of the chimney; and there are stone seats for the children and dogs. In that place all our evenings are passed very happily; we eat our dinners and suppers there. In front of us we have a high rail with a gate to shut us in. As our chimneys are known to have no good draught, we little ones catch all the smoke with the cat or dog. The old folks sit all around the chimney, and if the night is a cold one, they put roughly constructed screens patched up with all kinds of papers behind them.

Then they put, for Christmas night only, large branches of *ginepro* (juniper) on the fire; it smells very good, and it crackles beautifully.

To keep us children awake, they let us put big chestnuts (whole) in the hot cinders, and when they are roasted we all know it because they make a little explosion. The cinders get into our mouths and eyes; that is part of the fun. The old folks put large terra cotta bowls full of wine to get warm on the stone steps, and they soak in it baked pears and apples. We cook chestnuts in many ways. One is what I have already told you. Another way, we roast them; number three, we peel them and boil them with laurel and fennel; or, number four, we send them to bake whole at the bake-shop—this last style suits old folks better as it is the easiest way to eat them; you press one between your fingers and it all comes out; it keeps all the flavor, which is very sweet.

Every night you could see an old woman, dressed up in petticoats, an old man's coat and a shawl on her head and shoulders, sitting in a corner of our city arcade behind her large basket of chestnuts, baked. She keeps them well covered up with two blankets and shouts: "Caldie boni!" (Warm and good.) For two or three soldi you could buy a pound of them.

Well, now you know that we had some enjoyment.

At half-past eleven we all start for the Vuomo, where the mass is going to be said. Our churches, as you know, are of stone and

marble, but although they are never warmed you soon feel comfortable in them. They only keep a braciere (brasier) in the sacristy, to warm the hands of the priests.

On Christmas night the crowd is immense; we children get the worst of it, as most of the time we have to content ourselves with being buried between overcoats and petticoats; once in a while our folks will raise us up to get a peep, and then down we go again in the dark. We dare not keep our eyes always raised, because our folks all take snuff, and as they are very careless, they always let some of it drop; if you catch it once you remember it for a long while. Finally mass is finished and we run home to our chimney corner, preparing ourselves to eat the grand dinner. But alas! half an hour is all we can stand; the trial of the mass, the heat of the fire from our place is too much for us - one by one we droop as you might see plants do in a hot summer day in the fields.

Next day finds us very stupid, but by and

by, at about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, we are up, preparing the stocking for the Magi. We hang our stocking at the side of the chimney, and go to sleep very early. The morning following finds us very bright and happy.

Well, winter goes by about the same; the only difference is we go to bed at eight and burn plain wood made up in *fascine* (fagots).

(The scouring of the chimney chains.)

As spring comes we have another enjoyment; the boys go from one house to another to collect chimney chains that we use to hang our pots on. No boy would take out his own family chain to scour, as he would rather get paid for his work.

When a boy gets as many chains as he can pull, he ties them with a rope, and then he fastens the rope around his waist and shoulders as they do in playing horse. Thus arrayed, he starts off, running towards the gate of the city nearest to him, out in the road, where there is a lot of fine sand. He runs as far as he likes, then he comes back, then he runs again, until his chains look bright, when he goes down to a stream and washes them before entering the city.

When he arrives at the house of one owner, he washes it again (this time in the fountain) and he hangs it up by the house to dry in the sun. The housekeeper gives him five or ten soldi, according to the length, or how dirty the chain was. The boy goes on delivering all the rest of the chains in the same manner; when he gets through he is ready to go to sleep. Next morning he runs off to the square, thinking what to buy with his treasure.

(Thursday Fat.)

In the middle of Lent—we call it *Giovedi* grasso (Thursday Fat)—we "burn the old woman," and we do it in this way:

Almost every house in Brescia has a court-

yard surrounded with balconies; we tie a rope to each of these balconies, and in the middle we hang the "old woman" (sometimes she is accompanied by her old man).

To make up the "old woman," we take an old undershirt, drawers and stockings; we stuff these up with rags, paper and straw, and with this stuffing we put lots of fire-crackers. We put on, for her head, a grotesque mask, a good wig made of fine paper or shavings.

Then we dress her up with some old clothes, and paper skirts. Her hands are made up with a pair of old gloves, and on her feet she wears real boots. She has a parasol in one hand; in the other she holds a nice paper lace handker-chief, and a good poke bonnet is on her head. Then we place all the rest of the fireworks on her parasol and around her petticoats. We let her hang there all day for the children to come to see her, and meantime we go around to the courtyards to see the others.

We all arrange the time to fire each "old

woman" off, so that we all can manage to go and see every one. That night we are free to go into any courtyards. As we meet around the fence, a big fellow puts a match to her skirts, and up she goes; first in a little flame, then a fire-cracker explodes, now her hand that was holding the paper handkerchief goes off with a bang; pretty soon one of her legs begins to tremble, and as you watch it it flies off with a kick; her parasol was tied very well on her other arm, so it holds the longest, and from that you see the fireworks start up.

After that we children start for the other places. It is about midnight when we go home.

After that hour every kind of enjoyment must stop, as Lent begins again.

(How we play Al Verdo.)

We have a game that we children play during Lent. We call it playing Al Verdo (the green), and it is this:

Lots of girls and boys meet in a yard or house, each one holding a piece of cauliflower leaf, and we take an oath to play fair. After that day whenever we meet, two at a time, or several together, we shout, " Verdo!" and we must show a piece of cauliflower leaf; if it looks suspiciously dry we require that it should be tried on some wall; if it doesn't leave any green mark the party holding it has to pay the forfeit; that is, at Easter, she or he has to bring to the other a Colombina (a dove), made by our bakers, with a dyed egg in the middle of it. I had to pay several of these forfeits because I shouted many times "Verdo!" and when it came time to produce the cauliflower leaf I had left it in my other dress pocket.

(Our sparrows.)

Besides this divertisement, we children buy sparrows' nests. We have a large cage for our little birds, and we begin from the time their little feathers grow, to shut our windows and, opening the cage, to call them out, holding a pignolo (a pine seed) in our hands.

At first they are little stupids, but after several mornings' trial, they like the game so much that whenever we go near their cage they toss their little heads and with a chirp ask to come out. It is rather pretty to see them, four or five in a room, flying all around. We always have some large branches or shrubs, and they enjoy it very much. When time is up, they let us take hold of them and shut them in.

We make calls with our cages. When several girls and boys bring their sparrows in cages, we put signs on all of them; on one lot a red silk garter, on another white or green, so at night we can take each our own.

(On Palm Sunday.)

Palm Sunday is a very gay Sunday with us. Early in the morning our cathedral is surrounded with olive branches, some as large as a Christmas-tree in America. The small branches are sold gilded, with little wax doves stuck on them.

The air is full of the fragrance and the noise of them, because we children each take a leaf of the branch, and splitting it as a quill pen is split, we bend it, and putting it between our lips, we get a pleasant sound from it; and as almost everybody does it on that day the music is great.

III.

(In the cow-stable.)

WHEN I was about ten years old, my family moved into a big house; there were twenty-four neighbors in it, and about sixty children besides ourselves. There my best life passed; there I played with other girls and boys on a good stage.

Our plays were our own; that is, we dressed as we desired, and we said what we thought best. We did not care for audience; the acting was for our own amusement. But one day the good lady that lent us her sheets and a large table to make the stage came into the room to do her knitting. After that day we had an audience of several old ladies; one of them was deaf, but she enjoyed us very much

— I think now that she came to see how we treated her old blanket, our drop-curtain.

I remember on the first night I moved into that house what a pleasure it was to me when one of the many children came and said that if I wished I could go down into the cows' stable after supper to spend the evening; of course I told that boy to come and get me whenever he chose. As he promised, he came at 8 P. M., in company with some other children all curious to see how a daughter of an American looked; and after going down five long staircases and turning into a courtyard and passing through a long mules' stable, we turned into another courtyard and finally we found ourselves in front of a large stable-door. One of the boys knew how to open the little door that opened in the big one. To see our way through that labyrinth we had lighted a piece of apron-string, having soaked it in one of our oil lamps, as we had seen the peasants do where we had spent our vacations.

Imagine my surprise and pleasure when I found myself in that cow-stable! I shall never forget the first impression it made on me. I thought myself transported into the stable where our Saviour was born. The only thing I missed there was the donkey. What I saw was this:

A large, almost square stable with three cows in it, with lots of straw; in the manger were several little babies, some asleep, and some playing with some bits of hay; scattered here and there, their mothers or sisters were sitting on common three-legged stools, knitting, spinning and mending stockings. Further along, two shoemakers with their apprentices were pegging away and singing; one boy there had a beautiful voice (later on he was picked up by a manager and came to America to sing in opera). Then came the fellow that was making baskets; he had a beautiful tenor voice, and while showing to some boys how to begin a basket he would sing out a part of some Italian opera; once in a while he would get excited,

and when singing Manrico's part in Trovatore as he arrived at the Malreggendo all'asproassalto he would brandish his short knife that he used to cut the small twigs of his wicker, and at the end of that song he plunged it in one of the finished baskets near him. I heard that opera sung all through by those people—women, men, boys and girls—from beginning to the end. If they did not know every word of it, they knew the airs correctly.

It was not an unusual thing to hear a very young voice in it, as some of those babies would not be forgotten. The Zingari song was grand, as the shoemakers would use their hammers on their stone slabs, and in that dim light of a dozen or so of oil lamps hung here and there, the effect was unique.

I don't know what those cows thought; once in a while they would give out their plaintive sound, but what it meant I don't know.

Then there was a fellow that was making toys, such as wagons, carriages, tables and chairs; he was an amateur and he always painted them with gorgeous colors. There was the man that had riddles by the hundred. We children looked on at those things. I liked very much the man that was making the soles for the wooden shoes (slipshods). In the course of the evening I struck a contract with him; he took my measure and I promised to bring to him the top parts of the shoes in a few days, which I did. My older sister stretched for me a nice piece of broadcloth on an embroidery frame, and she drew a design on it and I outlined it with scarlet worsted cord; after it was finished I glued the back of it with tragacanth and put it before the fire to dry stiff; afterwards I lined these uppers with coarse linen and took them down to the man.

I was so proud with my slipshods that I walked in them all over the city, and I always tried to see my reflected feet in some shop-windows.

In that stable we children would camp out

on the backs of those patient cows; these cows let us do it for a while, and when they had enough apparently, without giving us warning they jumped up very quick and sent us in every direction—sometimes in one of those mangers, sometimes on the back of some old woman.

(The Man with the Magic Lantern.)

One winter in the same house some bigger boys and girls than we were hired the carriage-house, and they built a regular stage; so I volunteered my services, and by helping inside and selling tickets for them I was free to go in at any time.

One day there arrived a strange-looking man; he spoke the Veronese language. We girls took a look at his room one day, and we saw that he had two nice dogs, and to keep them from getting on his bed, he used to put his cane, umbrella and gun on it. Besides we

saw that he had a magic lantern, and he was dressing some puppets.

Of course that was too much for me. I knocked, I went in, and in five minutes I was sewing for him; I dressed several queens and brigands. Meantime he told me that he was a wandering man, and he earned his living by going with his dogs to hunt truffles; besides he went to institutes, or to country houses where he played a comedy with his puppets, and he showed the views of the Holy Land with his magic lantern to the children. I engaged myself to follow him on his first journey.

(How I played the Queen.)

Two weeks afterwards you might have seen on a pleasant Sunday morning, leaving the big house, a little caravan; it consisted of a nice beautiful donkey attached to a little uncovered wagon, then two beautiful big dogs, then a tall gray old man, in a dress-suit, light gray tall hat, with a switch in his hand (for the little donkey, as the dogs understood him by his look); then two small boys; then a girl with a round face, short brown curly hair, brown eyes, turned-up nose, a big mouth, thick lips, large shoulders, short waisted. That girl was me.

As it was my really first début before the unknown public, I insisted on dressing myself up for the occasion. (I must have been ten years old then.) I put on a dress of light color, very short, a low waist and a black velvet bodice. It was summer; that bodice was very warm, but I would not go without it. My sisters and my mother with the neighbors stood in the doorway laughing, and wishing us a good voyage.

We were going five miles out of the city. We arrived before twelve o'clock, noon.

I shall never forget my joy; how my pride was satisfied! I had about a hundred children around me. I had to answer all their questions; they gave us so many fresh figs, wal-

nuts, and so much wine that we could not eat much dinner when that hour came.

Of course I had to leave them for a little while; I had to lock myself in the grand hall with my troupe, to prepare the barrack for the performance.

We took out our big green linen curtain, and with the skeleton frame we soon made a house big enough to keep us four and the trunk that contained the puppets.

You must know that I had a double speaking part; for a queen, and for a common woman. Well, we rang the bell. The rector opened the big door, and the boys wanted to come in all at once.

I stayed in the barrack until I had made my first speech, and then I went outside, to see what impression I had made on the boys. As I was standing outside our barrack, a boy came to me and offered to sell me a sparrow's nest, with three little baby-sparrows in it; he asked me three cents for it, but after looking inside

my pockets I found only a cent and a half; as he could get no more, we struck the bargain.

I was so taken up with my sparrows that I forgot all about my next queen-speech. At first I noticed some fingers pointing at me, but I could not make out what it meant; then one of the boys inside the barrack, as he was holding a brigand, thought best to shout for me; I heard only these words in our dialect (which is Lombard), "Popo due set;" in English it means "Poppet, where are you?"

I took my sparrows with me in the barrack; I laid them down carefully in the trunk where all the wooden performers lay; I picked out my queen, and by sticking the middle finger of my right hand in her head, the thumb in one arm, and the other two fingers in her other arm, I raised her up on her throne just in time.

A brigand was brought to her feet (of course you know that puppets have no feet, but the brigand supposed she had) and in a plaintive cantilena he told her his guilt.

It happened thus, he said:

One day he made up his mind to begin a good laborious life, so he went to a drug store and hired himself out; he was to receive ten cents a day with meals, and he had to pound spices from morning at five till eve at nine. He worked very well for a couple of days, and one summer day while he was working as usual his padrone lay down to sleep under the portico, and told him (the brigand) to shoo off the flies from his face when he could. So Giovanni (that was the brigand's name) pounded away for some time, and when he noticed the flies on his padrone's face he shooed them off; but one of them was so obstinate that, in spite of his attendance, she would sit always on his padrone's nose. Giovanni got excited, as all Italians do; took up his big iron pistone that he was using to pound the spices, and went for that obstinate fly. He killed it. And very proudly sat down waiting until his padrone should wake up to show him how well he obeyed him. He waited for a good while. When some customer came into the shop Giovanni told him that his padrone was sleeping, and he told him he wished he would awake so that he could show him that dead fly. The customer went for the gendarmes; when they came they told him that with the fly, he had killed his padrone, and they brought him before Her Majesty's feet. He asked her pardon and mercy.

The queen made him stand up, and then made her speech. She told her courtiers they were wrong in condemning a worthy servant like him, as he had only obeyed orders. She gave the brigand a bag of sequins, and told him next time to wait until the fly had rested on another place before killing her. Here the curtain dropped, while our showman played an unique march on his concertina.

We rested a few minutes; for refreshments we ate figs, bread and wine. I had to look out for my family of sparrows, they were crying very loud. I started on feeding them the best way I knew. I took some bread, I chewed it up very much, and so moist I rolled it up in their mouths. I kept on until they shut their eyes, and their little stomachs stuck way out.

Then it was time. We had to put our minds to the sacred panorama views; I had to give the descriptions as they were passing on the wall. After each view and speech, the gray man's concertina would give out a sigh or two like this: Oh! hi! ho!

At seven we finished our show; they gave us more fresh figs, walnuts and wine, and two pretty gourds to me and the boys my companions.

(Our night-journey.)

We stayed with them until the twilight, and then our caravan started; we had increased, as I had my three sparrows. For about an hour or so I held them in their nests, but by and by the wine, figs and walnuts told on me, and I thought best to set the nest inside the wagon in the rear, and join the boys; as it was very dark we trusted the donkey's knowledge, but the poor fellow perhaps was sleepy and shut his eyes as we did, and before we could tell how it happened we found ourselves all in a big ditch; as we tried to pull the donkey up, he opened his mouth and gave forth one of his melodies, so that we had to let him go, as we got scared; the dogs began to bark and howl, the old gentleman called all the saints to help him, and I, for the first time, wished myself at home.

We remembered that there were on the wagon the ends of the two candles we had used on our stage; so we lighted them. At that new light the donkey cried again, but we got him out, and started anew on the road; this time we really looked like gypsies, and when the candles cast our shadows on the ground—the dogs, and the donkey with his

big ears, I tell you I forgot sparrows, show and fame.

We three children held on to the rear of the wagon. I only remember that we talked very slowly indeed, and finally we were dumb. At last I saw the door of our big house, and the people gathered there to welcome us home; but what they really said, I could not make out. I saw my mother coming towards me, and kindly take me by the hand; but after that, I don't remember anything more.

On Monday eve, twenty-four hours afterward, I woke up in my bed; my mother said I had slept all that time. Gradually the past came back to me; I remembered my poor sparrows—they looked still satisfied, their stomachs beat a little. I dressed myself and went to see the boys. One was up, but the other was sleeping still.

The old showman taught me how to feed my birds; he made me give them an egg. He boiled it hard, he took out the yolk and ate it himself; with the white he mixed some Indian meal and very little water, then he rolled it up and fed my sparrows.

I was very much obliged to him for having taught me to feed them, but I grudged that yolk! After a few days I found one of my birds dead; I thought of making some profit with the others, as they cost me about three cents (that is three whites of eggs, as I ate my yolks now).

I traded one for a pretty cage, and so Number Three had a nice house all to himself.

I always attended school regularly, but that Monday I felt too dizzy, and I was kept busy telling my last Sunday's adventures to the neighbors.

Our old Veronese had to go to another city, so I kissed his two good intelligent dogs, and wished him a good voyage; although I had a hope to see him again, I never did. I am afraid he is dead now.

IV.

(My accomplishments.)

I WENT two years to the Normal School, afterward I spent all my school days at the Convent of the Dorothea.

I shall never forget the good nuns. I was the only girl there that never had a father or mother to bring a complaint against her, and when some stranger came to the school, and asked who I was, the nuns would answer:

"Oh! she is the daughter of the American."

As they knew that I liked an out-door life it was always me that they sent out to do errands, and I took care of the fresh flowers that girls would bring every morning. In the winter we girls had to furnish firewood for our school, and any morning you could see us girls each

with a fagot in our arms, going towards the convent.

They—I mean the nuns—never could get me to work more than two afternoons at the same job. I learned to knit, to embroider, to put good pieces into torn stockings; I cut out paper designs, and one year I took ninety-two pieces of dress goods, all of the same kind of material, and by joining them nicely I made me a skirt; it was so well joined that the nuns made me show it at the examination. I learnt to crochet and to make paper flowers, especially lilies; I made two large stalks of them for our altar, and I saw them still there when I left the convent; I helped to decorate their church.

(How we gave a play.)

We had a good theater. We used to give such plays as these: "St. Elisabeth of Hungary," "David and Saul," and many others of the same character. Not to bother the students, the nun Maria Colomba (that was her name) would take us into the cellar to rehearse.

At 4 P. M., school being finished, we would meet and arrange for outside plays. The mother of two school-girls was the janitress of a large soldiers' barrack. All our barracks were originally Jesuit convents; in some of them you could still see their old theaters kept in good order, and when I was in Brescia, at the Barrack Jesuit, the soldiers themselves gave some good performances; but only gentlemen were admitted, and it was a soldier that impersonated the woman-part. This barrack being empty at that time we girls at the nunnery thought ourselves lucky to be allowed to use it.

Accordingly we studied a play, the title of which I forget now; but I remember I had the part of a friar. I remember this because on that occasion I lost for my father a very pretty, long rosary made of some fruit-seed which had been sent to him from Rome. We always dressed in genuine costumes and had genuine accessories.

Well, after we had learnt our parts well, we put our attention to the arrangement of our theater. As we opened the door we found ourselves in a very long, low-studded room, with a whitewashed brick floor. At the end of it we begun by hanging our blankets; at the sides and at the tops (as our blankets were gray) we put long red shawls horizontally and that made the front of the stage rather finished as we had another blanket for the drop curtain; we made two wings at each side with two table-cloths; we had no boards to make the stage with, so we stood on the floor which we covered with real grass and daisies.

As our audience had to pay only a cent each, of course they were willing to sit Arab fashion. For the back scenery we borrowed an old store awning (ours are of green linen and when they fade they are of a very pretty color); that awning we nailed on the wall; and in front and on the sides we put down real branches of elder, mulberry, weeping willow, with sunflowers.

I tell you that by the light of six candles, that we placed at the foot, with paper behind them, our stage looked splendid. We bought the candles with the money that we got from our audience; for you must know that we sold our tickets in advance as we had no funds, and we wanted to be sure about our expenses.

Except at the last act, the scene was laid near the friar's grotto. We made that grotto up with two large chairs; we put a cloth on top of them, then we placed real stones on it and around, and we put lots of straw under.

Sunday morning we went to mass, and we asked permission to be dispensed from the Sunday-school, and after eating our dinner in a hurry we went to our theater. We had twenty-eight paying patrons, boys and girls; we let in for nothing the owners of the draperies.

I, the friar, had to be found lying down when the curtain lowered; as we could not make our curtain to raise and fold up, we just sewed the two top ends to two strings, and let it down, where it rested nicely at the foot of the stage, and there the audience saw me, a nice fat friar, resting on the straw of the grotto. I said my monologue, and then the Cavaliere came in. (I forgot to tell you that we had no boys in our company; so the Cavaliere was a girl.) The girl Cavaliere begun to look around when I came out, and said:

"Welcome, O, Cavaliere! my house is to thee; make use of it as if it belonged to thee." I had to say all this in a tremulous voice as I was an eighty-year-old friar. Meanwhile the little bitings that I felt now and then on my ankles were getting too strong to be borne, so that I had to interrupt my speech, and forgetting my solemn dress and part, I raised my left foot and scratched my right one. I heard a roar of laughter; before I could think of the reason my audience having quieted down a little, I proceeded. We went very well for a while, when we heard from the audience this alarming shout:

" Madonna, quante peauless!"

In English: "Holy Mother, how many fleas!"

Every one begun to get up and look at their stockings; there they saw millions of them!

They ran for the door and left.

We actors opened the blinds and blew out our candles, and began to look at our stockings. Well, originally they were white, now we found them black — so thick and big those fleas were!

I did not stop to take off my clerical robe, I ran opposite to my house; I ran there with my girl-clothes on my arms; my mother had to put me to bed so as to change my clothes the quickest.

As it was not our fault that the performance was interrupted, we agreed to compromise; they, I mean our audience, were to pay us half a cent each and we would give them the whole play in a better room, which we did on the following Sunday, minus my rosary.

(How I made angel dolls.)

I always had a good memory, and as I love children the nuns put me to teach the little ones, and they all liked me, as I made them study without their knowing it.

I read aloud their lessons, giving the expression with my hands and eyes as preachers do. They liked it so much that unconsciously they did it too (monkey-like); and then I would make them angel dolls. I bought the heads and hands, and then I cut out for each the little body and rolled it in the way Italians keep their own babies from the time we are born.

They take us and put a chemise on; then the nurse puts us on her knees; first she folds us in a large square linen cloth; then she takes another piece of linen, and rolls that around our body too, but this one she puts under the arms. Then the rolling begins; she takes three metri (meters) of a bandage ten inches wide. Sometimes it is white, but generally it is weaved in

two colors, white and red, or white and blue, in pretty designs. That bandage is first done up like any surgeon's bandage, with the two strings inside (wrong side out, of course); she begins by putting our tiny arms down straight at our sides—like the mummies—and the bandage goes around us; but as it is easier for the nurse to turn us over on her lap, she keeps on turning us until the bandage has reached our feet; there she gives it a pull, turns over the end of the piece of linen, and ties the feet. While she is doing this we keep perfectly quiet. I think we feel a little dizzy.

After that she puts us on a large pillow made on purpose. It is a long pillow, and large enough to come almost together over our body, and it is stuffed with wool; she fastens it around us with three strings; this pillow is trimmed according to the circumstances of the family of that baby; she puts on our little heads a fine little white cap, and then we are ready for the promenade.



ITALIAN BABY AND NURSE.



I treated the angel dolls I made for the little ones in the same way.

(How a baby enjoys his Cerchio.)

As soon as an Italian baby begins to show strength in his limbs, he is put in the "Cerchio" or "Cercle," a sort of a hen-coop, large at the bottom, and narrow enough at the top to hold baby in it; it is made of wicker and weaved very open; the upper part is lined with horse-hair; on the outsides there is a small rail large enough to hold playthings for him.

When baby gets tired he makes himself small and sometimes he almost disappears under the *Cerchio*; then he is taken up and put to bed, or to crawl on the floor.

But when he gets stronger he not only pushes that *Cercle*, but you might see him any time in the streets or piazzas taking hold of it and running; to see him reminds you of a rooster when he gets ready to fight; and some-

times the babies will fight, particularly when there are several of them in one street; for each knows enough to desire some other baby's toys.

At first they would put forth their tiny hands, and with their arms outstretched beg for the other fellow's plaything; then as the baby sees that his pleading is all lost, he raises his *Cerchio* and starts for his enemy who, seeing him coming, grabs hold of his own *Cerchio*, and off he goes toward his mother. Sometimes three or four babies get together; then, as they tip toward each other, it is really fun to watch them. The economical mothers to save washing generally pin their young one's clothes pretty well up, so we have no trouble to see their movements.

There is another kind of Cerchio made; it is shaped like a bench, only it has a board at the bottom of it. Sometimes that board is covered with a piece of matting. At the top of the bench-shaped one they insert a board with a hole in it to receive baby in, and that board runs on casters on the sides. With this kind

of Cercles the baby will learn to turn, as it is generally two meters long; and the mother can do her house-duties without being afraid that her baby will run away, as is the case with the other kind of Cerchio.

A little later on we give a variety to the baby by putting a sort of a brace (made of strong linen) around his little body, and we hold on to the two long stout reins; harnessed thus, the baby has his little hands free, and his shoulders don't get dislocated.

Around the neck the baby of the poor people has a string with a piece of "altea root"— marsh-mallow root—attached to it. It is very good for the baby to chew, as it is hard and pleasant to the taste.

(Our mountain houses of refreshment.)

Our city of Brescia is surrounded by mountains and hills. On those hills scattered all around are the peasants' houses. They are very

large, all made of bricks, stones and mortar, with big doors large enough for the large wagons drawn by oxen to go through them.

Outside of those houses you could see different signs hanging from a balcony or door; some have the signs painted, some written in strong-colored paint, describing the arrival of a country party; such words coming out of their mouths as they are holding a glass of wine in their hands:

"Drink, drink, compare, or I shall kill you," and the other answers: "Rather than be killed, compare, I will drink."

Some only have the inscription on; they generally write on them these words, *Vino Buono*. But they all have a garland hanging from the door; it is made of laurel or juniper. Everything invites you inside.

When you have passed the big door you find yourself in a large orchard, with a vine trellis almost all over it. Our vines are arranged as porticoes, just high enough for a tall man to walk under them. Under those vines the peasants have put strong, roughly-constructed tables. Generally the legs of these tables are trunks of trees. The house itself always has a portico with a wooden balcony or two that surrounds all the inside of the house; some houses have a portico and a balcony outside too.

When Sunday comes, we all go, rich and poor. Either we take our own victuals cooked, or to be cooked, or else we go with empty hands, and order our dinner there.

As there are several of these houses, we take our choice, and change the place when we like.

We like to eat birds on the spit; and such spits we have! Some of them date back many, many years. Some are turned by a boy, and some have clock-work to make them go.

To make the children leave those clocks alone, they tell us that the weights that hang from them are loaded with gunpowder and they will go off if we touch them; so we stand there, and look at the weights lowering, lowering themselves until they touch the floor. (Sometimes those kitchens have no floor; it is made of sand, like the portico outside.) Then the man in attendance will wind the clock up again until the birds are cooked.

Such a sight for a child!

The man tells us that the birds will be cooked when they smoke from their mouths. So as we see that long-waited-for smoke come out of their mouths, we children give a shout.

As to the place to eat them, we don't trouble ourselves much about it, as we are free to eat them anywhere we please; in the kitchen, the balcony, or under the beautiful vines.

There on any afternoon on Sundays you could see us *cittadins*, of all classes, partaking of the good things that were served to us by a very pleasant contadina.

Those people are smart; they keep the old contadina in the kitchen, and let all her young ones come out in their Sunday clothes and serve



A YOUNG CONTADINA.



out the good wine (their own) in jugs and bowls made of terra cotta.

We had to bring our own forks, knives and spoons, and napkins.

The young contadina is very happy when we praise her place and wine. She generally wears white stockings, slipshods, a short skirt of her own made linen; the waist of the dress is very short, shirred at the bottom in the middle of the waist, the sleeves shirred from the shoulder to the elbow, then plain for a few inches, then shirred again to the wrist. She is very skillful with her needle, and you see from her own stockings what beautiful work she knitted in them. Also the bottom of her petticoat, and the top of her underwaist, will show you that she can embroider.

The shirts of their men are all made from their own spun linen, and embroidered very finely all over their fronts.

With that costume she wears a colored velvet or foulard shawl over her shoulders, very low on the neck, a necklace of coral or garnets; sometimes a contadina will carry a pound and a half of them around her neck, with long earrings to match. Her hair is done up in large braids; she combs it early every Sunday morning.

Of course the every day costume differs a good deal; these young women only wear wooden slipshods, no stockings, and a cotton shawl.

In those houses we always get a good soup, and then birds, chickens, and ribs of pork broiled on a big grill. We always like to eat birds cooked on the spit.

We cook them thus; we take a bird, we string him on a spit, then we take a flat piece of porksteak, in the middle of it we stick some sage, we roll that up and string it by the side of the bird; and we keep on until the spit is full. During the cooking, of course, the attendant throws a gravy at intervals on the birds with a large spoon.

Well, our dinner being ready, and our place selected, we sit down to enjoy it, with the good wine. I tell you, it is nice to sit down in the open air, always dry and warm! We are not obliged to hear a bad orchestra; if we don't like the fiddle, or the flutist that volunteers to play at our dinner, we are free to tell him to try his music a little farther on. Sometimes we have very good musicians. They make a very good living, as they are treated well with food and money.

We are free to go all around the place, and by paying a few cents we can eat all the fruit we want from the trees or the grapes from the vine, and that is the very best way to enjoy fruit.

We dance and keep merry until sunset, then we begin to descend towards home.

(Our Crickets.)

We children are quite sleepy by that time, as we have run all day chasing locusts and hunting crickets. To catch the crickets we drop a little water in their holes where we hear them sing. They come out to see if it rains, and we catch them in surprise. We take with us a little cage that a man makes on purpose in our market.

It is about three inches square. He sells a cage at a cent each. The cages are made thus: he takes two pieces of board three inches square and in one of them he sticks lots of bits of wire all of the same length, then he puts the other board on top; the wires are put very close together. By pulling up one wire you make a door for Mr. Cricket to go in. The man puts a ring on top of each cage — all for a cent.

Well, when we get a cricket we give him a lettuce leaf every day, and we set our cages outside our windows. As we generally have more than one cage the music at times is very lively.

(How we helped make wine.)

PERHAPS our way of making wine is not a clean way, but it tastes very good, nevertheless.

I remember leaving home early in the morning with lots of girls and boys and going out in one of the faubourgs, where we would halt and ask some peasant boy the nearest farmhouse where they were making wine. After he told us the place thither we would go.

But we don't rush at once into the courtyard, oh, no! we stand at a certain distance, studying the faces of the farmers. According to their looks we advance, first very timidly, and we wait to see what air is blowing, as we say in our country; we wait for some bunches of grapes to drop out of their baskets or vats. When a bunch falls out we run and pick it up and return it to its owner; he generally tells us to eat it. Then after having disposed of that bunch, we are at their service to help.

I must tell you now how this work of winemaking begins.

First of all the farmers, when their grapes are ripe, hire lots of girls and boys from the city; these girls and boys hire themselves out for the season, and in the meantime they take the grape-cure. And that goes naturally; as they don't get much meat at the farmer's house, they eat bread or polenta and many grapes.

To pick the grapes they all go on a team. On the team there are lots of large baskets, and sometimes they have a vat too. A man or boy takes hold of the oxen's heads as the team drives under those portico-shaped vines; and there amid the singing and chatting the young people work and pick away.

Well, after the grapes are all picked, they

drive to the house, and they put all the grapes in the vats. Then two or three men get into the vats, in shirt sleeves, their pants rolled up high on their legs, and with bare feet they step and step upon the grapes until all the juice comes out of them.

The vats have a hole in the bottom, with a wooden faucet, and thus they draw their wine, which runs into another utensil, that we call "Gerla panier." It is made of the same kind of wood as the vats, and is shaped so that it fits the back of a man; he straps it on his shoulders, and he puts that wine in another tank in the cellar. There they leave it to ferment.

It is while this business goes on that we children stand ready with our long squash stems.

We dip these squash stems in the panier, and draw the wine up at the other end. In drinking the wine in that way you don't seem to realize the quantity you take; as it is very sweet it goes down like syrup.

But when one of those men sends us away, and while waiting for another chance, we sit down; then we begin to feel funny. At first we chatter away very merrily indeed, then we begin to feel heavy, and our stomachs get hot; we lie quietly down on the grass and we are lucky that slumber overtakes us, as during that period the wine boils, ferments, in our stomachs as the other wine ferments in the cellar. These slumbers sometimes last several hours, and when we awake we find ourselves in the farmers' kitchens.

Well, for that day we have a good time.

Next day we go to another place, where they take the squeezed grapes and put them in the *Torchio* or press. With that they get the second wine; after that is squeezed they take the seed of the grapes and put it on a large paved space in the yard. If the farmer doesn't have a proper space, he generally puts it in front of a church; as there is a nice square marble place. When that seed is dried suffi-

ciently they press it, and with another ingredient they make the aquavita.

(How we enjoyed water-melons.)

The water-melon business is one of the many traffics that go on in our city.

We have melons that come from Ferrara, and we have our own that grow just outside our city gates.

When the season begins every fountain in our city is utilized, as every person that means to sell water-melons secures the fountain near her home.

The venders all lay in a large stock of them, and they store them in a roughly-made board inclosure near the fountain. They leave enough space in a corner of that hut to sleep in, as they camp out during the melon season.

At the front of the inclosure they place a table or two, with two or three chairs; these serve as a barricade as well as give the appearance of a shop.

They next take a long wood or tin tube and attach it to one of the spouts of the fountain; the other end of it goes into a large wooden vat where there are always several melons to cool.

If a customer wants a cool melon for his dinner, he goes to these people and picking up one he has it out to see that it is to his satisfaction, and after bargaining for it, sometimes a quarter of an hour, he makes a sign on the melon, and sets it in the vat until he goes home to dinner. The vat being tipped a little, the water keeps changing. Near the tables and above them they place a large keg and they fill it with water. Around the keg they put some branches of mulberry, and from the bottom of it comes out a long small tin pipe that goes under the table and comes up through it.

We Italians cut our melons into small slices for the children, and they cost a centime each; we keep the middle part for the old people or whosoever chooses to pay two or three cents for it, as this middle is the best part of the melon.

It is around these tables that you could have seen us children watching the beautiful sprays that that little tin spout of water threw all over the table, washing the cut melons, and keeping the flies away.

When night comes all those tents, with their numerous colored Venetian lanterns hanging around them always with the red shade thrown on the melon — oh, they really look like gypsies' tents.

(When melons were abundant.)

I remember in 1866 when we had the cholera in the city of Brescia, that the Government used the barrack that we girls had made our stage in, and later on as the morbus increased they used another barrack that was also opposite our house.

Well, in that year I ate more melons than at any other time.

As the Government had prohibited them as

unhealthy things, we children would go to those farmers that grew them, and for two or three cents he would let us go and pick our melon from its ground. As the melons were too warm, we would put them in one of the many streams that surround our city.

There we sat, waiting for our water-melon to cool, and to kill time we counted all our friends we had before the cholera took them away; and when we heard a cicala sing, we would shake the tree that held her, and as we caught her, we would tie her leg with a piece of thread, and keep her there on the grass until we had another; then we would bet a piece of the melon on the one that took flight first.

After we had scratched their stomachs to hear them sing, we let them go.

(How we tried to smuggle a melon.)

After having enjoyed our melon one day we went back to the farmer's house and bought

another, with the idea of smuggling it inside the city gate, but as it was our first adventure in that kind of work of course we did not succeed.

We had arrived just outside the gate, and having put our melon under a shawl, we proceeded very bold indeed; but as one of the doganieri approached towards us, we turned very red in the face and started to run inside of the city; between the gate and the doganieri house there are about fifty feet; if you succeed to pass that limit you are all right, as even if the doganiere should discover that you carry smuggled goods with you he has no more right to stop you.

But we felt guilty, and the old doganiere knew it too. As he touched me on the shoulder I let go my melon and stood still. He did not scold us, but he refused to let us enter the city with that melon; and warned us not to eat it.

He was horrified when we told him that we had eaten another already. We offered a nice piece to him, but he refused it.

Well, we took our melon outside the gate again. We sat on the grass and ate it under the glances of that poor old doganiere.

This poor old superstitious man died that following night of cholera. We children were glad to know that it was not our melon that caused his death.

(How we kept light hearts.)

That day after having enjoyed a feast (after our fashion) outside the city we started to enter, and then we had some more excitement.

They had established at every city gate a little room with two doors facing each other; every person that came from outside had to go through one of these doors and remain there about five minutes to get fumigated. In that room there were five bowls full of disinfectants, and a guard stationed there would stir them up once in a while.

We children did not mind the fumigation,

but there were some old superstitious farmers that did not like it. That day we saw a few persons gathered around the door, and they were laughing at a poor farmer because he did not want to go in, and most of all he did not want that the *doganieri* should put his donkey in there. After some talk he concluded to turn back and try the other gates before going home.

It was not an unusual thing to meet an ambulance with some unfortunate in it. When we met one we would try to look into it, and if we could not recognize the person we would ask his or her name, then we would run to give the news to everybody.

That day we went to visit several places, helping around the house, and crying with the rest of the family. In one place the sanitary officers came, and prohibited us to leave that room before we underwent the fumigations. As that took time and we did not return home until very late, we found all our families to-

gether, wondering what had become of us. When we told them our adventures, they were very alarmed, and thought best to scold us.

Well, in time the cholera left us, and our beautiful city began to have the happy look around her again.

(How we were all Garibaldians.)

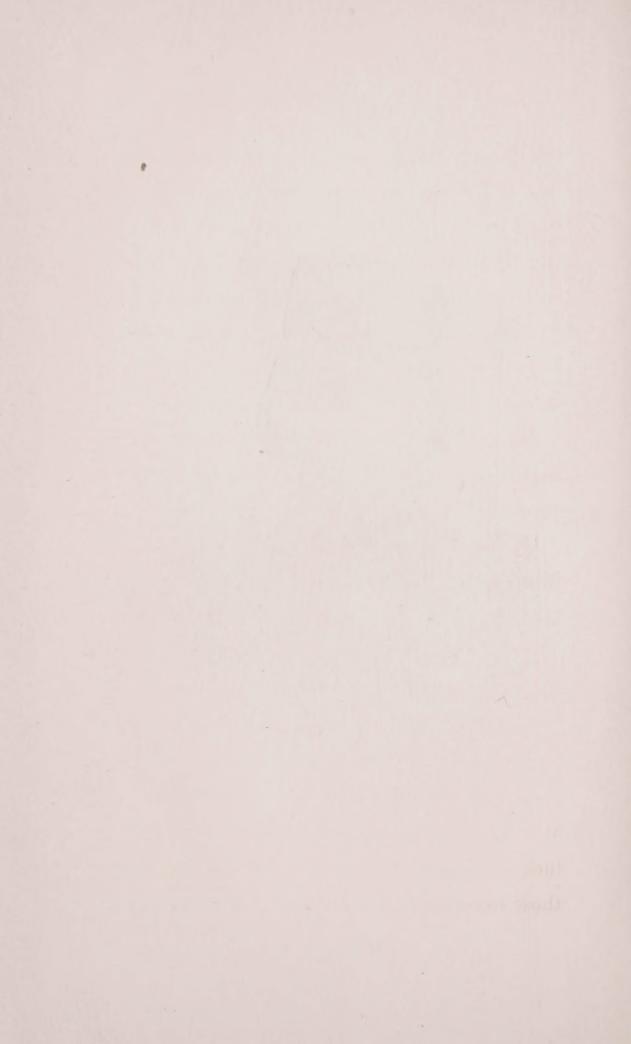
The war of 1866 turned the heads of our boys and girls.

Every house had some Garibaldians in it; all the dialects were heard in the streets; everybody looked excited and acted so, but always in good humor.

Of course I was there with the rest of them, when one day by order of the Government hundreds of gunstocks found to be defective were sold at one of our *piazzi*; I stood there in the crowd and bought two of them at five cents apiece, for a woman's children, just to amuse them and to keep them quiet until the



GARIBALDI.



Garibaldians should have left the city; every boy over five years old wanted to leave home to go with Garibaldi to the victory.

Besides the regular Garibaldi lodgers we had, my father every night would accommodate two or three fellows gratis, and my house looked like a camp as every morning we saw those tired fellows lying on our large sofa cushions.

My older sister was kept busy making numbers in worsted on flags and berettes. Every cittadin were something red.

Garibaldi was stationed at a short distance from our city, and he sent word that he would take any fellow able to fight, provided he had a permission from his parents. Every boy in town quitted work; they all turned Garibaldi's followers. Twenty-four hours after the decree of Garibaldi was posted on our city corners, there were very few boys indeed that had not at least red caps on their heads. The more lucky ones had some good clothes to pawn, and those came out in a red shirt also.

But that was not quite enough; the permission from the family was the hardest thing to get possession of. Some families had already two boys in the army, and the would-be Garibaldino was only thirteen or fourteen years old: so they refused the permission.

Every morning early the doganieri were asked to open the gates as a company of ten or twelve boys wanted to go and present themselves to Garibaldi. Some of these boys had a permission, but some of them made them out themselves.

Well, two days afterward you might have seen eight or ten of those same boys returning home very crest-fallen.

Garibaldi thought they were too young, or he detected the false signatures.

Then you might have heard the jokes from the smaller boys that had to stay at home; some of these jokes went thus: "Well, why didn't you change your shirt?" or "Why didn't you paint some mustaches on your lips?" The excitement among the girls was not less. Every girl wanted to be a vivandiére; and girls are harder to conquer, so many of them were more successful than the boys. Every house contained at least one would-be vivandiére.

They looked over their wardrobes to see if there was a blue flannel petticoat or a piece of red flannel for making a shirt. They too pawned their jewelry to buy the proper material: a blue flannel petticoat trimmed with red or white braid, red shirt, large brimmed hat with a cockade of white, red and green on it; a Giberna and a flask to swing on her shoulders; strong leather boots and white leather gaiters.

We in our house alone had four girls preparing themselves for the campaign.

VI.

(The Square of the Greens.)

WE have in Brescia several *Piazzas*, or "Squares," as you call them. One is called *piazza delle erbe*, square of the herbs, or greens; that Square is surrounded on two sides with low porticos under which you could drink the best chocolate that is made in the world, and buy the fresh *paparelle* and twenty or more kinds of macaroni.

At one end of this Square there is an old palace; the inside of it is used for a theater, and several offices; but the outside of it is hired by some market people. I have been in their fonda a great many times buying nuts, filberts curubule, and chestnuts in every style; that is: plain as they are picked, dried in their

shells, and out of their shells; and we could buy them strung up in twine at two cents a string, and I could buy for a cent enough chest-nut flour to fill my mouth several times. Some old women made a pudding or *polenta* (that they baked at the baker's) of this flour, and they sold it to us at a cent a pound.

All those things are sold in the porticoes; and all around the palace, which is very high, are hung up brooms of all kinds, and straw, correggia and wicker baskets; they cost from two cents up.

(My duckling.)

Although the marketing is carried on in the open air, and with the appearance of not having separate places, they all know where to go with their merchandise. If you should want to buy some birds or chickens, you would have to go right to the corner near the church; there you will find all the birds, alive, or strung up

on fine sticks of wood by the dozen. They sell chickens all prepared to cook; but most of them are kept in cages, so that you may buy them alive.

We, I mean our family, always kept a few chickens, before killing them. I and my sister saved our pennies, and when the season came that the farmers' wives brought their chicks and ducklings to the market, we could buy two or three at a time.

One day a poor old woman came to our city, and she had a round basket with the cover on; she sat down on the steps that surround our fountain, and while eating her lunch she thought to give freedom to her ducklings; so she opened her basket, and let them amuse themselves in the little puddle, in front of her; but they were not used to the city noises, and they began to wander around too much. When the poor old woman wanted to put them back into the basket, she had hard work. I volunteered to help her, and in recompense she gave me a pretty

little yellow one. I ran home with joy, and put him with the rest of our collection.

Well, while he was little, I managed to give that duckling a bath in the house. My mother let us put our menagerie in the attic; we had four chicks, a big rooster that went for our legs every time we passed near him, two rabbits and five guinea pigs, beside that duckling.

When he grew too big to bathe in the house, I had to take that duckling down four flights of stairs and put him in the big fountain in the Square. He got so used to it that as soon as he saw me he would run toward me, and when I was taking him downstairs and coming back after his bath he would put his head around my neck, just like a baby. It was all right when he was dry, but when he was wet—well, I looked as if I had had a bath myself too.

Finally he got too heavy for me to carry him, and my mother had to kill him. I could not eat him; I cried very much, and we have still the feathers of his tail.

The rooster was getting too cross, so he too had to go. The chickens were spared as they laid eggs; it is true sometimes they only had a thin shell, but they were very good all the same.

If you don't like to kill your chickens the woman of the market will do it for you.

(Squares where we buy our food.)

Well, further on, they sell fruit; then comes a row of cheese stalls, and there you could buy fresh butter churned that morning, and all kinds of cheese. They are sold by women dressed in very clean white aprons and over-sleeves, and when the sun gets too hot for their heads, instead of a hat, they put a cabbage leaf on top of them.

Then, further on, they sell all sorts of greens.

Then come the butchers' stalls; they have wooden shutters and a big white or green umbrella over their wares.

Fridays and Saturdays only you could see

the sale of fish — fresh-water fishes kept alive in tanks full of fresh water.

In this Piazza we have a large fountain, and at its four corners there are four little ones; besides these there are several small fountains attached to the arcades.

So the fish merchants put a wooden pipe to the spout of one of these little fountains, and thus they let the water run into and out of their tanks.

I remember when my mother bought some sardines one day; she took them home and rolled them in flour, and when she was preparing the oil to fry them in some of those sardines had jumped on the floor.

(Little-hands lemons.)

The square space allowed for the sale of lemons and oranges looks very well on a bright sunny day. There we children would stand, and bargain for our *manine*, "little hands."

This is a kind of a lemon that grows in Riviera di Salo; it is shaped like little hands and feet, but the toes and fingers of these lemons are very distorted; in the inside of the palm or the sole of the foot, there is a little juicy place the size of a cent—the rest of it is whole, thick and sweet.

As the man sold them at a centime apiece, we children stood there generally an hour, selecting them according to our fancy. We never bought more than one soldo's worth; so when we had found just the distorted member we were looking for, and bought it, we would turn to our right and go straight to another man's Square.

(The Tyrol toys.)

This man always kept his wares spread on a piece of straw matting; they consisted of toys all made of wood; he came from the mountains of Tyrol to Brescia when he was a boy. He

had learned his trade at home, and lived in Brescia in company with a few of his country fellows. Once in a year he went to see his family. During his stay in our city, his folks prepared all the toys to be ready for him to take back.

For a cent we could buy a bucket, or a salt mortar, or a table, and every article that a child needs to play doll-house with. And such a doll he would sell for a cent; it was about four inches tall, and all jointed, and the face and hair painted. His dolls were better proportioned than the dolls they sell at other places; when our doll opened her arms she was as wide as tall.

Then he had reed canes; with those we made our soap bubbles, and he sold six for a cent. Besides he sold distaffs for two cents apiece.

Next to him there was the man that cut out bronzali to order; these are pots that are hewn out by him from a solid piece of lava stone. To buy one of them is like playing at a lottery;

because you might chance to have the pot cut out from a good stone, or it might turn out to be a bad stone so that you had to throw away the pot, as you never could succeed in having the bad smell driven out of it; of course the man himself says he cannot tell, as the odor comes out after the pot is heated.

(The man with the copper machine.)

One summer there came to our market a tall young man. He selected a nice place, drove a few sticks in the ground, put a strong rope around them. Then he opened a large box that he had on a little wagon, and from that box he took out a shiny copper machine; it was shaped like a Russian coffee-pot, only that under his machine he could build a fire, which he did that day.

While the fire boiled some strange substances only known to him, he made a table out of his wagon; then he put a large marble slab on it; afterward he took from the same box hundreds of little wooden boxes.

When he had placed all these things where he wanted them, he rolled up his sleeves (as he had a dress suit on) and he looked at us children and asked us if we wanted to help him; he promised us five *soldi* each for that day, as our market hours only last until four in the afternoon.

I stayed there in company with two other girls and two boys. At first he gave us some sheets of fine parafine paper, and we had to cut them up in small sizes like the pattern he gave us; then we had to open all the small boxes and prepare them with their tops underneath.

While we were engaged thus he was talking very fast, and was putting several things on his marble slab; after he had mixed them he put everything in that machine. He let these substances boil for some time, and in all that time he had drawn a crowd.

Well, he told everybody that he came to our city to make and sell shoeblacking, but a shoeblacking that we have never seen the like of before; and that he would sell it at only a soldo (a cent) a box, as soon as it was made; and that he would remain two weeks, so that the purchasers could find out the quality of his blacking, and he advised them to buy lots of his blacking, as he was not going to come back until the next year.

Having said that and many other things, he looked at his watch, put out his fire, and opened a faucet attached to his pot. From that faucet we could see coming out the precious blacking.

He only took a little of it at a time, enough to roll on the palm of his hand. After he had it flattened on the marble slab, he oiled his hands and made tiny balls of the blacking; afterward we children took it and put it into those boxes, placing a piece of parafine paper on each of them; after handling several of them, we could do the work very fast. My mother did not know of my new vocation, and just imagine her surprise when she got near our wagon to see me there, my sleeves rolled up, with some blacking all over my face, shouting with the rest, and taking soldi as fast as I could deliver my boxes! I told my padrone that that lady was my mother, and he presented her with two boxes.

Well, it was no use for my mother to scold me, as I told her that I liked the job and I was getting fat over it.

(Honoring the Madonna.)

Our market is open for business from five in the morning until four in the afternoon; after that hour each market man or woman gathers up his or her merchandise, sweeps her place, and leaves the rubbish in a pile. Afterward the city spazzini come, and sweep everything up, and wash the Square, by throwing water over it.

The market people are very devout, and it

is they who maintain the handsome little church at the end of the market. When we have too much rain, they go to see the Madonna that stands in that church, and make a voto. They say to her that if she will send us some fair weather they will give her a nice silk dress. The same voto they make to her when we have too much dry weather; then they ask for some rain. Whatever they promise to her they give.

You could see on any day, if you choose to go in through the dark-green door of that church, how well-dressed the Madonna is, and what beautiful altar laces there are; and that is only for every-day affairs.

When the anniversary of that Madonna occurs, then you see the change among those market people.

Every one of them from early morn are at the market as usual, but they are dressed in their Sunday clothes; they all wear all the jewelry they possess; their heads are shining; the men wear immaculate white shirts, and such watch chains and rings! They are all shaved that day.

During morning they take turns to go to hear mass; that day they celebrate mass every hour until noon. At four that day they go visiting each other, drinking white wine and eating sponge cake. Then they turn their minds to the arrangements for the evening.

For several feet away from the church they have hung all sorts of draperies, flowers and laurel; they have made festoons and arcades with them, with lot of Chinese lanterns (of our own make, though white, red and green, some with the stemma d'Italia painted in colors on them) as under those arcades the procession is going to pass.

Well, at eight in the evening, all the singers and musicians meet at the church. At the sound of the argentine bells, the four carabinieri march abreast; then come the musicians, then the priests and the choir-boys, and after comes the baldacchino carried by six strong mar-

ket men. The six tassels of this baldacchino, which is very richly embroidered in gold on a white antique satin, are held by six little girls, daughters of some of the market women.

The Madonna is dressed in a white silk velvet dress, all embroidered with precious stones and gold. She wears real diamonds — a necklace and a crown. Her mantle, which is blue, is embroidered in silver. She has a beautiful brown wig on; her curls fall down on her shoulders. By the light of hundreds of wax torches held by the market men, women and children, she looks really handsome.

After the Madonna come the singers of both sexes. Although they cannot read music, they sing all in time, and very prettily.

As they go around that section of the city where these market people live, it is generally about midnight before the show is over; then they all disperse, each one with their family, and drinking some more white wine they go to sleep very happy.

At the church it is very different; the boys have to consign their white robes carefully to the sacristan, the candles are left as a present to the church, and the Madonna is carried into the sacristy, and there they undress her; they put on her everyday dress again, and her everyday wig, and she is hoisted up again to her place at the altar.

They let her have a little light all night. This light is very mild as it comes from a beautiful antique lampada hanging right in front of her.

VII.

(How we gathered violets and roses.)

OUR spring and fall have caused a great many poems to be written, but no matter how many there are or how well they are written, they will never give you the impression of the real Italian thing or of the real Italian effect.

Think of us children of the country; our outdoor fun begins in May.

That month is dedicated by us to going out in the fields, to gather violets and roses from the surrounding gardens. We would bring home pockets full of violets and large bunches of beautiful roses.

I was always fond of little children, but at that time I insisted on taking with me only clean and neatly-dressed children; so on any day from May to October you could have seen a tall, fat girl going from house to house, collecting her favorites; they were girls and boys, but they all wore petticoats.

I had a big basket; in it I put all their lunches.

I had to cross the city with my little happy troop. As I allowed them to play on their little instruments, as drums, trumpets and sharp whistles, the shopkeepers always knew when we were coming; if I had a few spare pennies I would invest them in a jumping frog, or a harlequin with a string attached to his arms and legs.

When my little troop had to make a halt, we stopped on the steps of our Theater of La Scala, or on the steps of some church. There some of my children ate, and then played for their own pleasure and satisfaction; I meantime setting my jumping frog in position, or pulling the string of my harlequin; after we rested we

started again, for Porta St. Navaro, or Porta Tonlunga.

Although I made the children obey me they all liked me. They knew that if they did not behave they would get left at home the next day. At times I had as many as seven of them.

(The miller's Madonna cats.)

Sometimes I took them near a flour mill that goes by water, or near some washing house.

One day I took my charge inside of a mill house; there the patient miller lectured to us. He showed us two large round stones; between them he put some corn, and then he set the mill a-going. While that corn was getting ground we children made friends with his numerous cats; they were all of gray color. We call them Madonna cats, because they have the letter M on their foreheads; and of course they were all covered with white flour.

They were used to the place and noise; they looked happy and fat, as they walked around us purring, purring.

We children believed the miller when he told us what that purring of theirs meant. He said they were saying their prayers.

The good miller gave us some of his meal and white flour to make bread for our dolls. I had a doll until I was eighteen years old.

(At La Badia.)

La Badia! How that name made our child hearts happy! La Badia is a convent kept by friars, two miles from our city; to go to the Badia, you have to go along the same road that goes to the cemetery, and keep on until you come to a large stairway, very antique; at the foot there is a large cross, with a rooster on it.

This stairway is divided into four different ones; each of them have different steps, some are high steps, some low, but all very broad at the foot. As these stairways and the parapet on top of it is of white marble when the sun shines on them it is very dazzling to the eyes. But we Italians like bright things.

At the top you find yourself in a large rotunda covered with all kinds of wild flowers. In the middle there is a church, and at the side is the convent of the *frati della* Badia. Every Sunday around that place is like a holiday or fair day, by the big crowd you see there.

The men contadini go in one door of the church, the women at the other. They all come in their Sunday clothes and some women come with bare feet; they carry their stockings and slipshods in their hands until they arrive at the church; before entering it, they sit on the parapet, and put their things on. When they come out they take them off again.

We children attended the Sunday-school in the city, and our teacher once in a while, would give us notice that on the following Sunday she would take us to the Badia. We knew what that meant; we prepared for that day our nice dresses; and that Sunday morning we all met at her house. Each girl carried her own bundle; in it she put either some birds, cooked or to cook, and a pound of Indian meal and some salt and pepper; another girl would take some pork chops, or sausages, and so on; but always a pound or two of Indian meal, and her own plates and forks and tumbler.

We each put five *soldi* in the hands of the teacher's brother and when we were out of the city, he would go into a wine shop with his demijohn, and get it filled with good red wine, *vino rosso* as we call it.

Then the teacher would buy some fresh fruit from the *ortolani* (orchard men), and when our little party arrived at the top of that stairway, we would sit down on the parapet, and look around.

As our air is pure we could see for miles around. I always loved to see our corn when

it was laid out in the sun, either in the pannocchia (its ear) or all grained. If you could see it once, you would never forget it; at times to my eyes it looked like a mass of gold.

Well, our teacher would think we had better go to the convent, and as we pulled that bell, which has an harmonious sound, a good-natured friar would come to the door; we would give him our bundles, and he would listen patiently to our orders, and tell us to return at noon; our dinner would be ready.

To pass the hours we turned to our left, and found the deep stairway that leads to the woods.

At first we found some oak-trees. We gathered lots of ghiande (acorns), as we knew that they would come good to us sometimes; for instance, when we ate too much chestnut flour, or too many broiled little birds that we children were so fond of; then our mothers would boil those acorns, and make a coffee with them — it is the best remedy for a stomach

ache; I drank gallons of it during my stay in Brescia.

Then we would go further on, and find lots of chestnuts — we had to pick those up, burrs and all; if you slip on those burrs you will remember it for a good while. They stick to your underclothing, and when you feel a prick and think to find the burr that does it, you fail.

As we were gathering chestnuts and ghiande, we would hear the sound of silvery bells that came from the convent; so we would go back, and this time we rang at the refectory, and the door would be opened by another frate. We would see on entering the long table covered with the things we brought, only they were transformed in the best possible manner, and they smelled very good, I tell you. Then, after having said our noon prayer with the friar, he retired, and we began our feast.

As we came to the dessert, each girl had to give a song or a sonetto; I contributed the sonetto as I never had a voice to sing.

Two o'clock came by; at this time we left the refretorio, and went out on the terrazza.

Before leaving the Badia we went (as it is customary) into the church, and put some soldi in the box for the poor, and then we started for home. But although we would leave the Badia at such an early hour we never would reach our homes before sunset, as we would go visiting. Our contadini are very pious, and we girls would always take with us some Madonna chromos, and in return they would give us some good fruit, dried lavender, or some medlars to take home and put in our husk beds to get ripe.

(The flowers of St. John's Eve.)

The eve of St. John we don't go to bed at all.

At sunset, the little square where St. John's church stands is beginning to be filled up with flowers in all styles, cut, in pots and dried; all

the gardeners, amateurs and professionals, male and female, come to the little piazza of St. John to sell their wares, for with the flowers they also sell fancy baskets and picture frames, all made with some dried plants and flowers.

We citizens after supper don our best clothes and go to see this fair, and for that night we hardly recognize that thoroughfare, as from the four different streets by which we can approach it, there hang hundreds of Venetian lanterns, around and on top of the porticoes, made from fresh flowers.

A good music comes through the open church door, as this large door opens facing the principal street. On that night when the church is all illuminated inside, the sight is grand.

We walk up and down the square until midnight, when we go into the church to hear some good organ music and an appropriate talk on St. John. After 1 A. M. we go out into the square again, and there we wait for the Rugianda, the dew of St. John. When we get that

we proceed to buy the flowers we want. It is customary to buy fresh lavender in branches or altea (marshmallow) root, strung up to put in our bureaus.

We children would buy little flower-pots with a sprig of some sort in it. The man that sold it to us would say that the sprig had a root to it; but very often there is no root at all, and we are minus two cents.

(My visits to the beautiful cemetery.)

When I was a child I used to go with the other children to our cemetery. We have a beautiful cemetery; it is outside Porta St. Giovanni.

After you have passed through that door or gate you find yourself in a good suburb; then you turn to your left, and you will find yourself at the head of the Cypress avenue, which is a very long one. At the end of that avenue you see a small church; it is ornamented inside

and out with fine monuments all of white marble. You turn to your right, and there you begin to see a long open gallery, all of white marble; in front of it there is an iron fence to prevent people going into it.

Under those arcades you see some fine groups, all carved out of marble of Carrara. Each group represents a rich family tomb.

In one, for instance, you see a beautiful young girl, half rising from her bed, with her arms extended toward an angel, that is over her bed. Her face, like all the others that are sculptured there, is a real portrait taken in the form of a mask soon after death.

In another group you could see an old gentleman sitting outside his palace door, holding a large leather bag in his hand, and looking at a little boy standing in front of him, half nude. The little beggar is extending his little hand to receive the soldo that the good man is giving him; in back of him there stands his father, haggard-looking, with his hands clasped as in

prayer; and an old woman poorly dressed waiting patiently for her turn.

In another group there stands a tall lady listening at a half-open door. She is dressed in mourning, with her long crêpe veil covering her all over. She is waiting for her dead husband to call her. This lady was still living when I was in Brescia.

Well, you could look on there for a whole day. There are other monuments all over the grounds of the cemetery; all have a little garden attached to them.

There is, low down in the ground, a little wooden shed, where all the ex-votos are hung; they are in the shape of wooden legs or arms, a bunch of hairpins and so forth, pictures showing a man, or woman, or child, falling down a very steep staircase. At the head of the stair, where the door should be, you see the Madonna in a cloud, standing there; and this shows that it was she that saved him or her.

There you see chains and bombs that were

thrown on some house; but the Madonna having appeared, they fell, without exploding. There are lots of other things of the same sort.

But what people go there for is to pray for their departed friends, and to rub their handkerchiefs on, or to kiss, a square piece of marble placed in the middle of the wall of the shed.

That piece of marble is always damp and cool, and they say that underneath there is the body of a priest that had turned to be a saint. We call him in our dialect *El beat curadi*, The blessed curate. And they say that it is his breath that causes the marble to be damp.

There are visitors more or less every day, but on a Sunday there is a crowd.

(The second of November in Brescia.)

The grand day, however, is the second of November, Giorno dei morti, Dead Day.

That day is celebrated as a regular fair day;

all the bakers and pasticcieri make a bread that is called pane dei morti, dead bread.

The bakers' bread is made of Indian meal and milio, bird seed. The pasticcieri bread tastes like American pound cake. The bakers send their bread to all their customers.

Early that November morning all the people are out, going toward the cemetery; rich and poor, young and old, all carry some flower-token to their departed friends.

As the cypresses are placed about twelve feet apart on the avenue, between each two cypresses (that day) you find a stand of some kind. There you can buy everything you desire, to use or to wear.

The chestnut man, woman, and boy are there; so is the man with his toys, the florist with his flower designs, the man that will make you up tresses to put in your locket and ring, or make you a picture with the hair of your father, mother or friend, to hang up in front of their tombs. There too is the candle-man

who will sell a quarter-of-an-inch candle to a ten-inch candle, all decorated with gold, and white, red and green. Then there is the plaster-figure man; he has all sorts of things—large and small figures, small lambs, cows, horses, and small monuments; so if you are too poor to have a marble monument for your dead you can buy one of his, that will last at least until the next Giorno dei morti.

The inside of our cemetery is like a beautiful garden. That day the rich monuments are covered with expensive flowers, made up in all kind of designs; and when night comes you would think yourself in a fairy land, as under the gallery burn the five-foot torches; and as each monument has about half a dozen of them burning brightly you can read the inscriptions on them very easily. Then there are the other large monuments all over the grounds and the church; they are illuminated all around. And as the poor people have only a stone slab in the grounds they place thereon flower-pots in

bloom, and in front or at the back they put a candle; but more often they hang an oil lantern.

On this day and night all we children attended the show. We provided ourselves with twine, matches and scissors, and walked all over the ground, looking to our right and left; if we saw any of the lanterns crooked we would go and straighten them and fasten them with our twine, and we would tie up all the garlands that got loose; we snuffed the candles, and guided strangers to certain graves, that in the midst of such a crowd they lost sight of.

At the end of that day we went home tired and greased, but we enjoyed it very much.

VIII.

(Our Punch and Judy.)

EVERY summer evening all the working people who could not go to the large theaters used to go to the *Teatro dell stelle*, "The Theater by Starlight," as they used to call it; going to see and hear Punch and Judy in the open square.

The owners of the show had put benches in front of their barrack; they charged a cent for a seat. Other persons who chose to stand paid whatever they chose to the woman when she came around during the performance.

She had a queer candlestick that held a candle; it had a handle made into a ring into which she passed her finger, and in the bottom there was a box made of brass, like the rest of it. This box had a soft cover, and whenever she got a penny she would push it down so nobody could steal it.

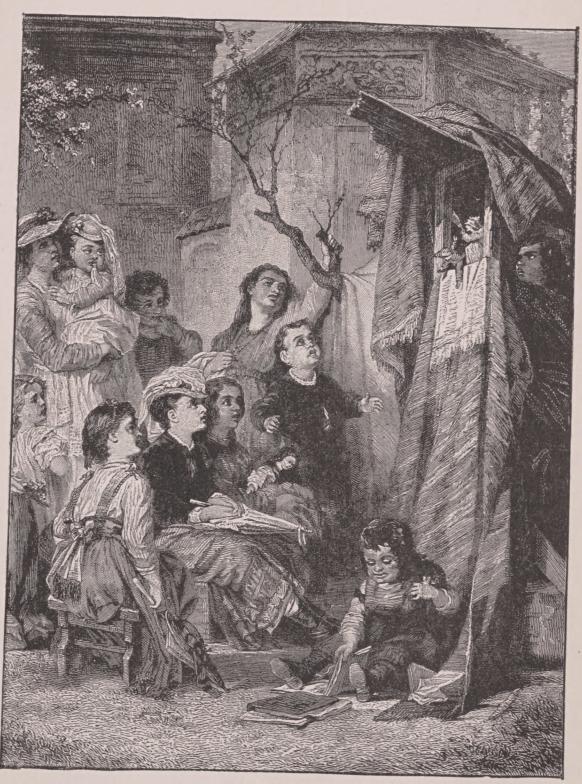
Oh! how I envied that woman. I thought I would be very happy if I was in her situation; I always wished to live in a circus wagon.

For a long time I used to follow her with my eyes, and finally I began to talk to her. I volunteered to watch her benches and sell her seats; and so sprung up our friendship that only broke up when I came to America.

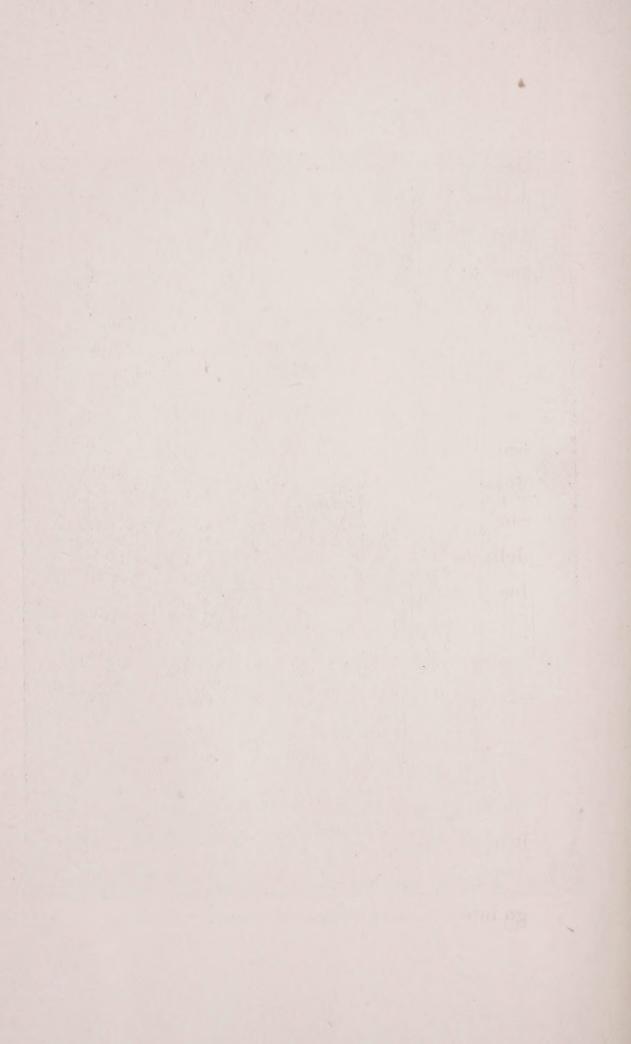
This lady with her folks and her puppets would give a performance every evening eight days in a square, and then move to another; but it made no difference to us. While she kept in the limit of five miles we would follow her; big and small.

We children liked it because we only saw the outside of the play; that is, we paid our attention to the dialect phrases of Harlequin, who was a counterpart of a Bergamo peasant.

And the grown-up people liked it because



OUR PUNCH AND JUDY.



(as I have found out since) they listened to regular political speeches on the new bread tariff, poultry tariff, and several other things that the man inside the puppet barrack had learned by heart; he had been paid for shouting them through his barrack stage.

I remember one night we children cried because we saw the *Carabinieri* taking our favorite man away; it was just after he had delivered one of those speeches. He himself was not crying, however, as he was sure of being delivered soon, and he was earning a good pay for his family.

One day, I remember, I discovered the reason why this man, when he held up his puppets, never looked up at them as the other men did; it was because he wore a wig and he had to keep his head down so as not to let it fall off.

I was so happy in my discovery that I told it to everybody.

The consequence was that he never let me go into his barrack again.

(The red-haired family.)

One evening, during one of these performances, I made the acquaintance of a red-haired girl; I took a liking to her because she squinted; I always did like people that looked two ways.

I chatted with her until ten o'clock in the eve, when on going home she showed me her house. Of course next day after school I called on her, and found that she had only a mother. But she had two sisters; the older, short and stout, and the younger tall and pretty; also a small boy brother and a big one that was already on the stage as a first ballerino; all redhaired. She showed me lots of the ballerino's costumes.

The family lived by making and selling crocants, turnovers and other cakes; they used to make them in a big *fondac* cellar; they kept all their flour in there, and their sugar barrels, and long boards on wooden horses.

That day I did not return home until eight

P. M. as I remained with them to dinner, and afterwards watched them making their cakes. I broke their almonds, and they showed me how to put only three half-almonds on each crocant.

They sold them at a cent apiece. They are about four inches long. When the crocants were all prepared on those long boards we carried them to a bake shop opposite.

We went up a ladder into a little room very hot; it smelled of sugar, heat and yeast. There under my eyes I could see some of those cakes rise; but I had to leave them soon, as my head felt rising, too. But when they were brought back baked we had to detach them; didn't I eat lots of them!

The other girls ate not so many, as they were used to them.

(Our theater in the Bakery cellar.)

When their big brother came home, we told him we would like to start a theater, but he would only teach us to dance. We did our best to please him, and by promising to do some tableaux vivants, we got him to lend us some of his costumes, and he brought some from the costumer of the theater.

We made our theater in the cellar, but we could only give two performances a week (as they had to use the boards of our stage to make and cook the cakes on), Wednesdays and Saturdays.

We took some whitewash and painted all the place white; that helped to light it up some.

In the doorway we hung Chinese lanterns; they were painted white, red and green, the Italian colors; and on the night of the performance, the mother of these girls sold souvenir cakes with the tickets.

In this theater we had a good drop curtain, and the boys painted some boards, and they served as wings; the cakes were made on the other side. It took us all the week to get everthing ready.

We had in our company a lawyer's son, and as he put two francs towards expenses we gave him the best part in the play.

The opening night the cellar was crowded. We gave Daniebe Maning, a play that could only be given on the largest stage of the city, but we were ambitious; and for an after-piece, the tableaux vivants with the ballet dei gobbi, under the management of Giovanni Tasolini.

In the play I had the servant part, with a wig made out of very fine paper.

At the end of a play they have to show behind a cloud—at first, all the Capitals, with Venice liberated; to make the effect of the clearing of the clouds, we hung two sheets and a mosquito netting; this last one near the figures. As the drapery disappeared and the figures became more visible they lighted the red bengal, and the effect was beautiful; but the fellow of the drop curtain wanted to look at the audience, and let the curtain fall. I ran to him and shouted, "Up, till it is finished!"

which he did. The audience liked my idea and applauded the show very much.

After this play, the old lady (mother of the girls) went around and sold more crocants, while a boy had some nice fresh water for those that cared for it.

Behind the curtain we were divesting ourselves of the serious costumes, and dressed up for the *ballet dei gobbi*; after being dressed we had to help to clear the stage, as we had no scene-shifters.

The manager had given us some clothes made with long bodices and short pantaloons, all in one piece. We jumped into them, and then they buttoned them up from behind, with very large buttons.

We were each dressed differently—that is, as far as to the color of the dress; but we all had very large, tall hats, and our figures were stuffed out with hay. We wore long pointed shoes, with no heels; they were made of kid to match the color of the dress.

Then the manager painted our faces. First he modeled our faces — thus to me, having already a pug nose, he put a big lump of cotton at the end of my nose, and he enlarged my mouth; then he painted my ears. Another girl had a long nose, so he pointed it more. He made the most of all defects and peculiarities.

When we were all fixed to his own liking he put us opposite one another.

We were eight girls; we stood four at each side of the stage, and when the curtain rose, and the people gazed at us, they all burst out laughing; we kept pretty serious for a while, but finally we had to laugh, too, as it was the first time we had seen one another. We were so transformed that for a while our own mothers could not tell us apart.

We had for orchestra one of those big *Organi*Verticali; they contain all the instruments used in a regular orchestra.

We began to dance thus: We faced each other and when the music began we all bowed,

then we advanced and began to dance a minuet; at intervals we took out from a pocket behind a big snuff-box, made for this occasion; it was painted gorgeously. Then we started the *Monfrina*, a national dance like the Cachuca in Spain. As we dance hand in hand, we turned very quick and our backs come together, bang, every time; of course we had to rehearse for that dance, so that it might go smoothly like any ballet that you see on the real stage. We were very much applauded, but we did not care so much for that, as we enjoyed ourselves ever so much.

Well, that was over; altogether the show was a success. It lasted from one P.M. to six P.M. You never saw a happier community in your life; everybody seemed satisfied.

When everybody went, we the troupe had to dismantle all the theater, as the boys had to make their crocants. We had a nice dinner afterwards.

That night I slept happy.

IX.

(Our silk-worms.)

HEN the season comes we children, in Italy, have much to do. Almost in every house we raise silk-worms. Of course the people that raise them for business hire large empty houses in the country, so as to be near the mulberry-trees; others give out the seed to women that choose to raise the silk-worms in their houses.

The silk-worms are very delicate creatures. They must have pure fresh air. When we have a stormy day they have to be fumigated, and great care must be taken lest they should die suffocated. No tobacco smoking or snuff is allowed in a room where there are silk-worms; if the women take snuff, they must

wash their hands every time before they touch the leaves.

(The silk-worm tables.)

In the big house where I lived with twentyfour other families, there was a woman that
kept and raised silk-worms. She had ten long
tables; these tables are about six feet long and
four wide; they are made like the berths of a
steamer, with the sides of light wood, while the
bottom is made with corregioula or knot grass.
In the middle of the room, they place a strong
wooden frame with four strong poles. Inside
these poles they put pegs, and it is on these
that the tables are laid, one above the other.

We always leave enough space between the tables to let the silk-worms breathe. We always begin at the top table to change the worms' bed.

This woman had a friend of hers to help her; she gave her two francs a day and meals; we children used to go in and help too, and in payment she gave us the dirty beds.

(The silk-worms' birth.)

The first day the silk-worm woman has to sit or stand in front of the table, and watch over some Japanese silk card-boards twelve by fifteen inches big. Those boards are literally covered with what seems at first to be fly-specks; but as the room gets warmer those little specks begin to move. At her side the woman has prepared some young leaves of mulberry; the leaves are very dear at first, as the man that picks them must be paid three or four francs a day.

(How the mulberry leaves are picked.)

When that man goes on a mulberry-tree he always wears a red handkerchief on his head, and I always have seen this handkerchief tied at the four corners; so when we meet a man in

the country with such a handkerchief on his head we always say, "Look! he looks like a Relarino—a leaf-peeler."

Then he ties his clean canvas bag opened with a wooden hoop, on the tree, and with his hand half-shut he picks those tender leaves, but he takes care to let them drop, as fast as he can, into the bag, which must be kept very loose; and as soon as he has one bag ready he must deliver it, because if the leaves get wilted they cannot be used.

(How the baby worms feed.)

So when the specks on the cards begin to move, the woman takes some of these tender leaves and lays them very gently on the silkworms; they look like baby ants at first.

As soon as that leaf gets covered, she takes it by the stem and lays it on another table, and she keeps on doing the same thing until these specks are all born. Then her task begins in earnest; as they grow older, they get bigger, and every day she must change their beds.

It is then that she calls us to help her.

We begin from the top table; we put clean leaves on the silk-worms (when they have slept twice); we put on them small twigs of mulberry, and when they leave it, that twig is pretty enough to frame, as all the branch is there, and the leaves are perforated in a most beautiful manner; and when we have waited a certain time for the laziest worm to get on that branch, then the woman tells us to sweep the bed down into a basket, or on a large sheet of paper. We take this bed down into the courtyard, and there patiently we pick out our silk-worms that are left on the twigs of the bed, and we put them all in our aprons or basket, and we count them and examine them by holding them up to the light on the top of our hand.

If they are lively and without blue spots, we keep them; they are very cool to the touch.

When they have slept four times we look

them through again, and when they look so yellow and transparent we know that they are ready for the cocoon — bozzolo.

(How we children sometimes get silk-worms.)

To take the risk of keeping silk-worms, is like playing at a lottery.

I have known people that took all the care possible of them, and at the very end a storm would come up, and they all would die suffocated. And discouraged at the result, they would throw them out in a field; and many times it happened, that those same silk-worms, after having been out in the open air two or three days and nights, with a rain on their backs into the bargain, would be resuscitated, and climbing on some tree or hedge start and make the prettiest cocoon you ever saw; generally the farmer boys get those cocoons.

Sometimes we children follow the woman, and when she leaves her sick and dead bachi,

we look them over, and by handling them sometimes they revive. Sometimes we find a lazy one that had not shaken his night-shirt off; then we take hold of his head and pull his shirt off for him. We like to do that very much, as it has real fascination to watch the silk-worm pull out, first two legs, then four, in such a sleepy way. Of course we are not allowed to do that in the house of that woman, but our own are always treated so, and they seem to like it, as they make the prettiest cocoons for us.

(The cocoons.)

When they are maturi, ripe as you would call them, their "G" on the nape of their necks shows very distinctly. That "G" they inherited from the time their ancestors crawled all over poor old Giobbe — Job.

The woman prepares their bosco for them.

We call bosco — wood — the rough huts that

the woman makes around her room. They are made thus: she puts up a shelf all along the wall of the room high up above our heads; on top of this shelf she puts lots of fascine—fagots of small twigs all bent—so as to form an arch. On top of these fascine she throws shavings of pine-tree—the long curly shaving is preferable, as it is inside of those shavings that the silk-worm makes his cocoon.

When this bosco is prepared, the woman turns her attention again to the silk-worms.

She lays long branches of mulberry on the bachi, taking good care that they shall not touch the worms too much. Those worms that are ready and in good health go very gladly on the branch, but those that are sick, die.

When a branch is well filled up, the woman takes it and, climbing very carefully on a short step ladder, she lays the branch on the bosco.

At first the silk-worm seems surprised at its new surroundings, and if you watch the worms they will remind you of a lot of emigrants at a strange place; the difference is this: the emigrants look for a place to live in, and the bachi look for a place to die in.

These bachi, having selected the place they like, set themselves to work at once.

I thought that they said a farewell to each other before they closed up their little houses.

It seems that although they keep very quiet in their bozzolo they keep busy just the same in mind and body, as you could see by yourself (as I did) when they come out again so beautifully transformed into butterflies.

(How we children take care of worms.)

Well, I told you how the silk-worms are taken care of by the women; but how are they taken care of by us children?

First of all, those bachi that we gathered up from the beds, are carried by us into one of our rooms. We generally make our tables out of the doors of our bedrooms, which we take off of their hinges and place on two chairs. Then we go ourselves to pick our mulberry leaves; sometimes we find a good-natured man, and he will give us some from his own bag; meantime we eat the berries — they are sweet and juicy.

Sometimes our worms will have lots of leaves to eat, sometimes they have to wait.

When we have those great thunder storms, so common in our city, and at the time those poor women burn olive branches and pray for the weather to clear up, we children forget the silk-worms and go out to eat the hail, leaving our windows open — and those bachi don't die; they seem to know, like all other insects and animals, that they are in the hands of children; they live all through and make the cocoons on our shavings, and don't seem to care how our bosco is made.

We know that when the silk-worm sleeps he always keeps his head very erect; so at the fourth time we put on them some branches of that same mulberry, and when the branch is full we don't wait for them to leave it, but very gently and deftly we take our silk-worms, one by one, from the branch, and lay them on the shavings. They soon get used to it.

We children sit there watching them make their cocoons; they seem to sit on their hind legs, and they raise themselves up like a goat when she wants to eat some branches above her head; and they begin from right to left, and spit and spit; and their spit, or bava, seems to attach itself to the shaving. They go on doing so until they work all their houses around themselves, leaving just room enough to hear them shake when we shake them.

Sometimes the cocoon is green, sometimes it is yellow, and sometimes white.

(How the cocoons are sold.)

The cocoons are generally left on the bosco until they feel hard; at the end of that time they are gathered and put into large baskets.

These are made round, about five feet long, with covers at both ends.

We have a market place for cocoons, and in rainy days they occupy a caserma barrack near by; but on fair days the cocoons are laid out on the ground over straw matting. As each lot of different-colored cocoons are put side by side, white, green and yellow, with the sun shining over them, the sight is really beautiful.

Men and women are in the trade, and there the great silk commerce is carried on.

During those market days you can see all kinds of people. They come from all parts of Lombardy, because although our city is no more what it used to be, still it is now the great central place for the silk traffic.

Those people come to buy and sell, to exchange cocoons, to hire women, men, boys and girls, for the following work connected with the cocoon season, as some buy the cocoons for making the seed, and some buy them for making the silk.

Our cocoons had degenerated so, from diseased worms, that finally the trades gave these up entirely, and bought the Japanese semente or seed. I remember having seen a party of Japanese sitting at one of the cafés facing the cocoon market; they came to sell their seed and empty card-boards stamped to be used for the other seed.

Our cocoons were quite large, but not firm.

The Japanese ones are much firmer and smaller.

After we girls had gathered our own cocoons, we took them to the market and sold them to the market woman.

She always selected them and weighed them. We got from two to six francs for each *libbra* (our pound is about twelve ounces). The price varies according to the quality and the market demands.

With that money we always buy a memento to remember our laborious and pleasant days; we buy a ring, a pair of earrings or a pin; of gold of course. (How I engaged for the silk-worm-seed season.)

ONE summer an old lady asked me if I wanted to engage myself for the seed season; I said yes, right off. Accordingly when the time came, I went to the hall where everything was in readiness for work.

I shall never forget what a sickly impression that hall made on me, the first time I saw it.

As I had come direct from the outside glare on the white houses, with the sun as it shines in Italy, the hall looked more dark than it was with the big blinds shut. What I saw was this:

At my right there was a mass of something white; as my eyes got used to that somber light I saw that it was an immense long linen sheet placed on clotheshorses, and it resembled

very high waves; on that long sheet, the old lady told me, we would have to put the butter-flies when they were ready to lay the seed. In the middle of this large room there were three sets of long poles; on each set there were eight shelves, all filled with cocoons.

A little room was connected with a door that opened into this large one.

That little room was still more dark, as it was in there that the old lady kept by herself, taking care of the cartoons after they were filled with the seed, for they must be kept in a cool place until the season of the silk-worms arrives; otherwise, the seed opens, and when the young silk-worms are out we have no young mulberry leaves to feed them.

I must tell you my first day's adventures.

(My adventure with the soup.)

The old lady sent me to buy her a tripe soup at the next restaurant; the man put it up in a bowl and then put a large napkin over it, tying up the four corners.

I ran with my soup. And all went well until I reached the long staircase; there, I wanted to take in two steps at a time (a habit I have still).

That staircase was a little larger than my own; the result was, I fell up.

I had presence of mind to hold the napkin up.

I did not stop to examine the bowl, as it felt all right.

I laid the napkin as it was in the lap of the old lady; but as soon as she stuck her spoon in the soup, the bowl opened as by enchantment; and there her soup was, all spread over her lap.

As she did not know that I fell, she took it for granted that the bowl must have been cracked, and she sent me down to scold the restaurant, which I did, and he apologized to me.

(How I disposed of the butterflies.)

When I got back she set me to work in company with three women.

I had the order to dispose of all the useless butterflies; where or how, they could not tell me.

At first I thought that that was an easy job; so very gladly I started out with my box, about one foot and a half long by one foot wide, full of living creatures.

Seeing that they were butterflies I thought they would like to live among the flowers, so I took them to the nearest place I knew.

It was a house where I knew there was a beautiful garden.

I passed by the concierge's door; I gave her the good-morning. She took it for granted that I was going through the other door (as many of our houses are made with double entrances, and if you know the concierge you can go through it, thus saving a long walk). But this time when I reached the garden gate, I emptied my box, thinking what a beautiful surprise I was making for the lady of that house.

I returned to the hall. The women thought I came back very soon, and they asked me where I put those useless butterflies; but I would not tell them, as I waited for the discovery.

Alas! it came too soon, and quite different from what I had expected.

Shortly after, as I was at work, I heard somebody on the stairs calling my name very loud.

I could not leave my work, but the voice was getting near and near, and with the voice there came that *concierge*. She was very red, I never saw her in anger before.

As she came in she stood at the door, for the darkness of the place prevented her from seeing me.

I saw her clear enough, though; as soon as

her eyes got used to our light she came up to me and gave me a good pull, and in our dialect she said:

"Ha! ha! here you are, pretty figurine; is that what you do in other people's houses—go by quiet, quiet, like a cat, and then go in their garden and do mischief! now, my dear Signorina, come back with me, and pick up all your nasty butterflies. Who ever saw such impudence!" and lots of other things she said; but as fast as she was talking she stammered so that I could not make out much; but she did say very plainly: "I shall never let you go by my courtyard any more!"

I began to see that my task was not "sweet roses and violets," as we say in our dialect.

I was so surprised at that event that I forgot to cry or to laugh.

I followed the angry woman, and there in the garden I saw that she was right to get mad.

My beautiful butterflies, having lost all their fine down, they looked pretty, pretty shabby; they looked like common shipwrecked caterpillars, with two stumps at their backs in place of their once beautiful wings.

Although I was young, I took an interest in animals and insects, and the sight before my eyes made me feel compassion for them; because a few hours before I saw those same wretches healthy and proud, and now they were but half-living bodies!

I could not touch them with my hands, and I used the cover of my box to take them up with.

When they were in my box again, I sat outside that house, and thought, and thought, what I should do with them.

Finally I had an idea—I would drown them; so I walked towards my house, and going up two flights I knocked at the door of a girl-friend of mine.

I told her that I wanted to drown my butterflies, so she opened a door for me and I found myself in a sort of a garret with a large window without blinds or glass; through that window you look down a stream that runs under all our houses. I opened my box; it was time they were dead. When I saw them in the water I gave a sigh of relief.

After having had a chat with the girl I went to work again.

When I entered the hall, all those women in one voice asked me what had I done with the butterflies. I told them I drowned them; they looked at each other with an expression—I could not make out what it meant.

My heart was at peace now.

(I again see those butterflies.)

At 8 P. M. they let me go home (we have lunch furnished by the proprietarios. It consists of bread, cheese, wine and fruit).

I was getting near home, when I saw some people looking towards me, and a boy said:
"Here she comes!"

I thought at first that the concierge's story

had got around the street, so I did not feel uneasy; but as I got inside of my large door there I saw the fat cook of the restaurator calling me with his short index finger. I was going by him, but he said: "Come here, come here, I want to see you a momentino!"

As I went up to him he took me by the hand; he led me through his big kitchen, and inside of a shed, the same size as the one upstairs, he made me look down in the water, and before my eyes I saw what remained of my miserable creatures again!

I forgot that there was a grating, and the water was low.

The cook said that for several hours he smelled something unusual, and on investigating he saw those dead butterflies; he soon found out that they had been drowned by the daughter of the American. These butterflies I was not obliged to take away — he called a spazzino who took care of them. Of course I promised never to drown another lot there.

(How I amused myself.)

Next day I went to work again; the old lady showed me how to take the mother butterflies from the cartoon and place them on that long sheet; we have to take them gently by the wing and let them grapple on to the sheet. When the mother butterflies have laid all their eggs, which is the silk-worm seed, they droop and die.

Then comes another disagreeable task for me; now I had two boxes to dispose of. You see I had failed twice, and it was only the obstinacy in me that kept me at the job and prevented me going home and playing with the other girls. But I stuck to my motto: "Never give up that which I have begun."

One day while waiting for the box I was to empty, I stood looking out of the window with the blinds closed, and for fun I dropped a butterfly now and then; some would stick to the sign of the druggist below, and some did go where I intended they should—on top of people's hats; one of those butterflies on top of a black hat you can see a great distance off.

One fell on a boy's coat, and I saw that he was delighted with it, so that I dropped several to him.

He shouted for more. His voice was heard by the other boys that were coming out from the schoolhouse near by.

They all ran towards him, and as they looked discouraged because he would not give them any, I ran into the little room, took the box, and opening the window just enough to let that box go through, I emptied it on top of their heads and shoulders.

These boys shouted with joy; everything would have gone well if they had been different from other boys; but they were not. After having filled up their hats, they wanted to knock off those that were on top of that druggist's sign.

The result was that the droghiere came out,

and, being very cross by nature, caught one of the boys on his sign, and he gave him a good spank; the boy of course told him that it was my fault.

He left the boy, rushed upstairs; this time the women did not know what was the matter; he was too cross to speak. He wanted to take me to the *caserma* (police station). Of course I did not want to go; and he, seeing those four big women, thought he had better not insist, so he went away, grumbling to himself.

(How I disposed of some other butterflies.)

An hour afterward I had to take the other box to destroy; and in order to avoid the druggist I went round a whole block, so as to get out of the city.

I took to the road, and walked away out, and there feeling very guilty I began to scatter my butterflies in the dust of the road; when I finished I took another road and came home. As I was but a young girl I began by feeling tired, not physically, but morally; I began to feel that the silk-worm-seed business was not so funny as I had expected. I had to work Sunday too; but as a treat they let me go down to the doorway, but I was not allowed to go home, as I had my regular dumping work to do.

One Sunday as I stood in that doorway, I tried to pass my time by counting all the people I knew, whose names began with B, but as I counted I began to feel sleepy, and once I caught myself standing up asleep.

At vesper time our city is very quiet, as it is *siesta* time also; I felt the influence of the surroundings.

I tried a few of my acrobatic feats, such as standing on my hands, with my feet toward the wall, and distorting my arms and feet. But that work too was getting too monotonous; so I took off my apron and made up my mind to kill all the flies that would light on a

certain hinge of that big door; as by doing that I had to jump, I got waked up a little.

As I was engaged in my new sport I heard my name called. I knew what that meant; I took my boxes, taking care to change my road every day.

Finally the day came that our cocoons were all emptied of their butterflies; so we took one of those round baskets, throwing the cocoons inside and we looked them over very carefully; and when all those cocoons were packed away, and the women had put up the single shelf of the young silk-worms, the place looked very lonesome, as all the brightness of those cocoons was gone forever. I was glad the butterflies season was over, any way.

$(I \, nurse \, some \, silk ext{-}worms.)$

Now I had a pleasanter work to do; I had to feed some young bachi I had saved and change their beds; this time the beds were all mine.

I took the beds in the courtyard, and kept them all to myself.

The women gave me a corner in the hall, and when our boss came, he looked at them, and asked me if it was a special kind of seed that I was trying; he shook his head at them and said: "They look very shabby!" It is true they were pretty lame, but I never could throw away a silk-worm unless he was really dead.

Well, I stuck to these sick silk-worms to the last, and at the end of the season, I found I had fifty-five cocoons. I presented them to my boss; he gave me a franc, as a recompense for my perseverance.

(What I did with my wages.)

When I finished with them I received fifteen francs as my wages; I did not go home with my money; I stopped at a Jewish dry-goods store and I bought for myself a dress pattern, which figure I knew by heart, as I admired it every day I went by his store.

I was proud of that dress, as it was my very first new dress — I always had my sister's old clothes made up for me.

But I was not lucky with that dress, as the dressmaker to whom I gave it spoiled it in cutting it, and as I could not get any more cloth like it, my sister had to patch it up the best she knew.

I tell you, I have cried a good deal for that dress.

Well, it was one of the greatest disappointments that befell me during my youthful days;
I have never bought a dress pattern since.

(Our annual fair.)

IN August our annual fair begins. One by one you may see the acrobatic companies come, and slowly, slowly the tents are raised.

We have squares, and several lots, where these tents are allowed to be raised. Inside these tents you can see everything that is in the line of a show.

In one of them, for instance, you may see through several magnifying lenses all the world, and a man, if you desire, will describe the scenes to you without extra charge beyond what you have paid at the door — which is three cents.

As an extra treat you can always have a view or two showing you several bodies nude,

thrown on a beach; they are drowned people, and they have been photographed before the coroner arrived.

As they were taken in profile, I remember they looked to my eyes like flesh-colored frogs.

(How I assisted at a Passion Play.)

In another tent they show the Passion of Christ, but not as at Oberammergau.

In that show I have helped a good deal.

They pitched their tent right in front of our big house. I was standing before their entrance, and there I heard the troupe talking about supper; when a pretty girl came out from the tent, and said that she had enough if she could have a piece of bread and cheese of Grujere, and she wished she knew where to get it.

I stepped forward and told her I would take her to a place where she could buy good cheese.

So she came with me, and as we started

back toward the tent we had much talk about ourselves, and she told me that they slept at a hosteria—hostelry—called the Aquila nero, Black Eagle. I told her that I would go there any time she wanted me to accompany her.

When we arrived at the tent she took me in. Once in I saw that the place was arranged differently from the other tents, as this one had first, second and third seats; they cost ten, fifteen and twenty centimes, according to the locality.

As I followed the girl behind the stage, I could see the preparations for the coming performance. I saw a very large platform; it was round, and covered with a dark green rug; under that platform I heard some giggling, and looking under it I saw lots of boys; some were acquaintances of mine; they were paid a cent each for each performance, and their work consisted in pushing the platform around when the man in charge of it told them to do so.

I saw all the Holy Family sitting and lying

around, taking their supper according to their fancies.

The girl gave me some of her bread and cheese, and I joined the company.

I saw the Christ, that a few minutes later had to expire on the cross, drinking out of a bowl some wine, and chatting away very merrily. Pilate was adjusting some of his dress gear; the Madonna that night was not feeling very well; she kept lying on a pile of old clothes, but she was already dressed.

When my girl came out from a curtain where she went to dress, she looked beautiful; her hair was down on her shoulders, and she had on a faded pink long loose robe.

She was the daughter of the fellow that impersonated the Christ; Pilate was her uncle, the Madonna was her mother, and another girl was the Magdalen of the show.

As we were there waiting for the orchestra to strike one of her melodies (this Jerusalem orchestra was one of those old-fashioned organettes; the music that comes out of them is very melodious, like an old harpsichord) as a signal to get ready, we heard a great row outside the tent.

Pilate and the Christ put on an overcoat, and went out to see what was the matter.

It turned out to be another company of the Passion of Christ, that came a day too late, and in finding this other show well-filled, it made the manager very cross indeed; but Pilate and the Christ invited them inside the tent, they sent out for some more wine and cheese, and everything went along very well.

They remained there to see the performance, and then bidding each other farewell they went to try their luck at another village.

The performance began thus:

The Christ as a young boy dressed in a red tunic, stood on the platform. Around him there were five persons dressed as doctors; Christ had his hand and arm raised as if preaching.

The bell rang and up went the curtain.

A man dressed in black with a rattan stick in his hand, stood up and told the public that before them stood Christ preaching to the doctors. After that the organette played a symphony very slowly, twice, the figures remaining stiff as if they were made of wood, facing the audience five minutes, then the curtain dropped.

After five minutes' waiting, the curtain went up for the second quadro, as we called it.

Now the Christ was standing, already grown to man; he was surrounded by his apostles, the same persons only dressed differently.

In the third scene Christ is standing before Pilate. Pilate is sitting in a large arm chair, the judges are all around him. A boy stands at the side of Pilate with a paper gilt basin for Pilate to wash his hands in. Christ stands in front with his hands tied behind him.

The fourth scene shows the fellows gambling with dice for the tunic of Christ.

The fifth scene shows Christ going toward

the Monte Calvario; he meets Veronica; she has a linen handkerchief; when the curtain raises, this time Veronica moves toward Christ as if she was made of wood, and was wound up; she rubs her kerchief on the face of Christ, and then in the same movement she turns a little with the handkerchief spread out in her hands, and there we actually see his portrait. They go around twice, and that comes to an end.

Number six shows Christ on a cross; he looks nude, but he is covered with a flesh-colored jersey cloth, and wears a little petticoat; on his head he wears the thorny wreath; a man stands in front of him with a long-handled spear, the point of which is already stuck in the left breast of Christ. As they stop, a man in the black dress says: "Behold the death of Christ!" and when everybody is still the man with the spear pulls it out with a jerk; Christ raises his eyes and there you see what looks real blood, but if you

were inside the tent you could see that it is a lot of red silk.

(The monkeys' theater.)

The other shows are all varied. Some have the monkeys' theater, and all the monkeys and dogs there have dresses, and they actually act and perform regular pantomimes.

I remember the monkeys' show, because my brother made the wooden block for the headings of their advertising cards, and beside getting a good price for it they told him to send all his family. As I heard the man myself, I did not forget it. I went in that same day, and as I enjoyed myself so much I thought I would do a good turn to some of my friends.

The following day I made my appearance at the door of that tent with two girls; of course they did not look very much like me, but I told the lady in attendance that they were cousins of mine, so we went in. After two days, seeing a man at that door, I went to get two boys; I told him they were my foster brothers. He let us in, but when we came out he accosted me and said that I had the biggest relationship he ever saw before; but I told him that he did not lose anything by it, as I only went in in the afternoon and I helped to make his place pleasant with my parties, and that they sent their elder folks in the evening, which was true; so he let me bring more children, but only two at a time.

Oh! the monkey pantomimes! I shall never forget them.

The first one was this:

Think yourself in a tent with seats (chairs) on the three sides of it; at the end a long table.

The man comes out from a curtain at the back, and tells the people that they will see a pleasant party of girls and fellows (monkeys) come in and look around and take seats at the table and call for the waiter; the waiter will come out of his little tent to take their orders

— and as to the end of the pantomime, we will see it for ourselves.

The man then retires, and at the sound of a bell the party comes in, two and two, arm in arm; the girl monkeys with fans and parasols, the boys with canes and lorgnettes.

They look around, and after having made the turn of the tent, they go and sit at the long table; a girl and a boy sit alternate.

After they rid themselves of their fans, canes and parasols, they begin to make their mouths go, and they gibber and gibber away, and they are very funny to look at.

One boy finds a bell on the table; he wants to ring it, but a girl snatches it away from him and she rings it pretty loudly. We all laugh, and they too, showing us their teeth.

They wait a little while, and then they all pound with their hands on the table. While they are doing this you can see the cook or servant (monkey) coming out of a doll tent, give a look at them, gibber away and disappear.

After he has done that twice, he comes out with his white cap, short jacket and long apron, with a napkin on his shoulder. He looks at them first, then he advances; and when he is in front of their table you should see what a reverence he makes to them, his cap in hand. He really almost bends in two — and how he puts his little paw on his breast!

Then he goes back and returns with a comical long bill of fare, it is about a *meter* long. Well, those girls and boys read it; return it to him pointing out the things they like to have.

He comes next with a large waiter; on it are several tin cups; he goes back and brings several small lacquer bottles full of wine. These monkeys fill up their cups, and clink them against each other. The cook comes out with a covered basket full of eatables. He stops half-way, looks around, turns his back on his customers, and sticks his long fingers into it; he cannot draw out what is inside, so he sits on the ground and pulls out a big bunch of

grapes. He eats some and returns it to the basket; then he takes out a plate of beaten cream; he puts his fingers in and chews them, just as well as we children do when we have the chance, and then he rises and serves them.

After his party have had a good dinner, he presents them the bill. They don't want to pay; he stamps his little foot on the ground; they show their fists at him, and the row begins.

One fellow runs away; pretty soon he comes back with two *gendarmes*, and the way some fellow tries to run away, and the *gendarmes* catch him and tie his hands, is comical to see.

They march the party off, and the disappointed cook goes into his little tent, holding his little head with both his hands.

I tell you it is really enjoyable to see how those monkeys work without a man about them, and they seem to enjoy it too.

I have found those brutes more intelligent than others I have had to meet in later days.

(The military dogs.)

Another pantomime I saw showed a fortress and in front of it a little soldier dressed in a red uniform carrying a gun, and pacing up and down.

This one was a dog.

By and by another dog comes out dressed in a blue blouse, as a laborer; he is smoking a pipe, and as he approaches the guard barks. No answer; he levels his gun at the fellow's breast; the laborer seems to understand; he turns his back and runs out as fast as he can, with two hind legs.

A little dog comes out dressed very coquettishly; she holds a parasol in her mouth, she holds in her paw a paper, the soldier looks at it and shakes his head; she goes away.

The manager now comes out and tells the audience that this lady is the wife of the condemned officer, and came to find out if he was alive yet, and the soldier said yes to her; then



with her paper she would run to the general to ask him to sign a pardon.

In the next scene they are bringing the condemned man to be shot.

He is a nice, tall, military-looking officer (a very nice dog). Four other officers come out with muskets (these are monkeys), they bandage his eyes with a handkerchief, and they make him stand two yards off.

At a given signal from behind the curtain, their guns are levelled at the culprit, and bang, bang, they go off. He drops cold dead.

Just at that moment his wife comes in with the pardon in her arms. Alas! too late, too late! She goes away crying.

Now come two big monkeys dressed in dark clothes; one is pulling a dark green covered wagon. They come in front, they open the wagon; one gets hold of the head and the other takes hold of the feet of the dead officer.

(During all this interval that dog don't move a muscle.)

They lay him carefully in the wagon. Having shut it down they take their place again, only one pulls the wagon and the other pushes it from behind, and off they go.

Of course they varied their performances, and that shows how much those brutes can do with an assiduous, kind education. As the manager said — they all have been taught by kindness and presents of sugar, sweet almonds and grapes.

XII.

(How we worked in leather.)

THE last work that I did in Brescia before leaving it for America, was card cases and portfolios.

I worked with lots of other girls there. We had to take the hides as they came (whole), and with a form of a card case made of iron, we marked as many forms as we could get on, on every skin, and then we cut them out with strong shears.

Those forms that were whole and smooth, we only printed with a plain stamp, but those forms that we had to join we put under a press that had a most elaborate pattern on it, so as to conceal the places we glued.

Then we made glass photograph-holders, and we had to stencil the design on.

I helped to make drinking-cups, in a boatshape; these, too, were made of leather.

We had lots of blocks, boat-shaped, and we stretched a piece of leather on each and nailed it on; afterwards we trimmed the leathers and varnished them, so to make them patent leather.

(The large blue letter.)

Well, one day that I was working on the leather card cases, my mother came to see me with a large blue letter in her hand. After she spoke to me a short time, she begun to speak English to me.

I did not know what to make out of it. After I reminded her that I could not understand her, she told me to come home.

As in joke, I bade a pathetic farewell to all my working-girls, and told them that it was the last time they would see me in that building.

I followed my mother home; there in the

sitting-room I found the rest of the family and they told me that mother had heard news from her flourished country, America.

That letter had traveled thousands of miles; as after it left America it had traveled all over Verona, Mantua, Peschiera, back to Tyrol, and finally, having gone to Mori, they began to send it by little posts.

That letter had knocked at great many doors; if it had traveled a little longer, they could not have read the address. It was stamped all over it. Finally after three months it had fallen in the hands of the owner.

That letter was written by one of my mother's friends, to whom she and Charlie, little boy and girl, had written a letter when they arrived at Palermo in 1835.

In the letter, his reply, he said, that one day in looking over the contents in an old trunk, he found the old yellow letter, and a desire seized him at once to know what became of Lucy and Charlie, wondering if they were married, as he was himself; so taking the letter downstairs, he wrote to the only address that letter contained.

In his letter he reminded Lucy and Charlie of the beautiful woods, the old school-house, the old mill and many other things, saying how delighted he would be to see them again.

You may imagine the excitement in the hearts of those two, brother and sister; they both wished themselves young again, but as that was an impossible feat, they arranged that I should go with my older sister, and my aunt and uncle. The rest of the family would join us as soon as the family affairs were settled.

I stopped work and went to give the news to everybody of my partenza.

My young friends gave a dance in my honor in a farmhouse familiar to us. When the farmer's family heard that I was going away to the New World, they gave us everything gratis, that Sunday.

I had to dance with every one, and my tears

fell silently on my cheeks. I sobbed and sobbed while I wanted to tell my friends I was willing to go. We exchanged lots of presents, trifles, but the heart of the giver was in them.

The last day and night before I had to leave my happy home I kept out of my mother's way, as she would take my head into her hands, and looking in my eyes (with tears in hers) she would ask me if I was going away willingly.

I repeated "yes," always, and then I ran away; for what was the use to say "no"? I knew I had to go, and when I give a word I stick to it, if it cost to me unhappiness.

So that last day and night I spent it with the neighbors, and out in the piazza sitting on the steps that surround our fountain; and my mother with a large company found me. I called all my girls and boys together, and went with them to a restaurant, where a big collation awaited us.

The last one! After that, we all went at the station, and in the cars everything seemed a dream to me. I could not realize my true position. A momentary impulse set me to write my name and the date of that day on one of the stone pillars near the depot, and persons I saw a few years afterwards told me they could read it there still.

Once in the cars I stared at the crowd; I had a lump in my throat; I wanted to answer to all and I could not.

Well, we were moving; I heard somebody scream, and I saw several white handkerchiefs wavering; they looked like as many doves.

The Addio that came out of my throat was hoarse. I lost sight of my family; the lump in my throat went down; I cried.

(I see the sea.)

We stopped at Cremona, Bologna, Pisa, Pistoja and finally one morning we saw Livorno.

I asked a passenger what it was — that large plain I saw away off, with so many May-poles sticking out here and there; he told me that it was salt water, and the May-poles were masts of ships; one was the ship that was to take me to America. I felt a sinking sensation at the sight, as you must know I never had seen the sea, not even a lake.

We stopped to get a dinner in a restaurant, where they gave us some very good chianti wine, and we bought some cordials and citrons, and taking a boat we went to see the ship.

It was a three-masted ship, twenty-two years old; on board I found a nice pleasant lady and she told my uncle she was the captain's wife, by the name of Nickerson.

The ship could not sail before Monday, and our boatman told us that the morrow being Sunday, he would call for us.

(My last Sunday in Italia.)

So at ten in the morning he came in his boat; it was decorated with pretty draperies,

and had a few rugs in it. With him there was his wife.

We went with them, and we saw that we were followed by another boat. It contained two ladies and three gentlemen.

The ladies looked very pretty, with their clear skins and black eyes; they wore pink and white and pink and blue kerchiefs on their heads; they had two mandolini, a guitar and a flute with them. They took us to the faro—the beacon light.

Arrived there we took out two large panieri, baskets, full of good things to eat and drink, we spread the rugs on the beautiful marble spazio, and after having enjoyed our dinner, we went up to the faro-keeper, and presented him with a bottle of chianti wine and a piece of ciambella; afterwards we went to the molo.

There I saw all kind of people of all nationalities. Lots of boats full of young ladies and children kept coming.

They were all provided with at least a string

instrument, and on that *molo* they danced a variety of dances.

At crepuscolo we went back into the boat, and they took us all around the different ships.

When they found out that my sister had a good voice, they insisted to have at least a song from her.

She has a clear soprano voice, but I never heard it so vibrating and powerful as I did on that evening.

There was no breeze; the calm around us, with the sun setting, and the dull thud of the oars—it all helped to bring out the sound of her argentine tones; the accompaniment of the guitar and mandolin just suited her voice.

But she could not finish her song! the farewell to her lover came back fresh to her memory; tears were falling on her cheeks, we all felt the influence, we let her cry; after a while these good people asked her to give at least un piccolo Addio all'Italia

So she sang again.

This time they let the boat go adrift.

The captain had heard the music, but it being dark he did not know where it came from; he was very pleased when our two boats stopped under his ship, and the occupants gave Il coro dei Lombardi and l'Addio.

Night came, we all went on the ship — and there we stood to look for the last time on our dear, dear Italia.

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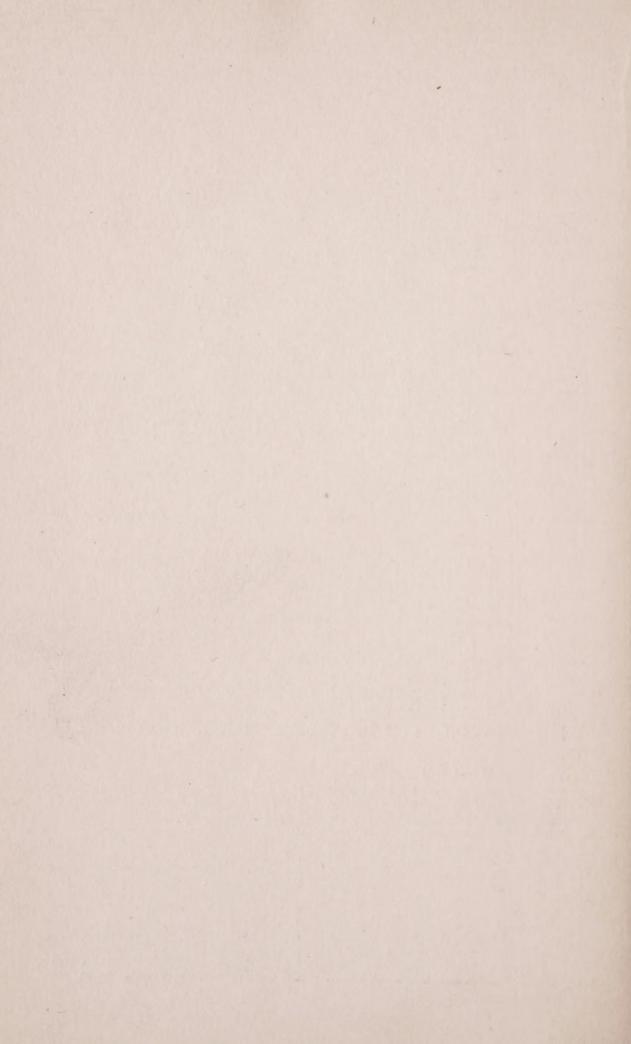
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